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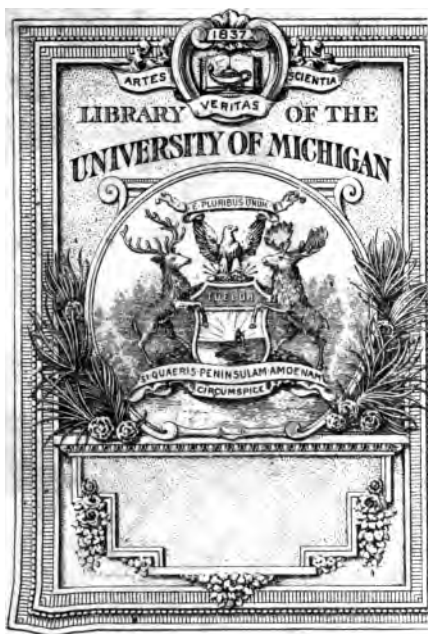
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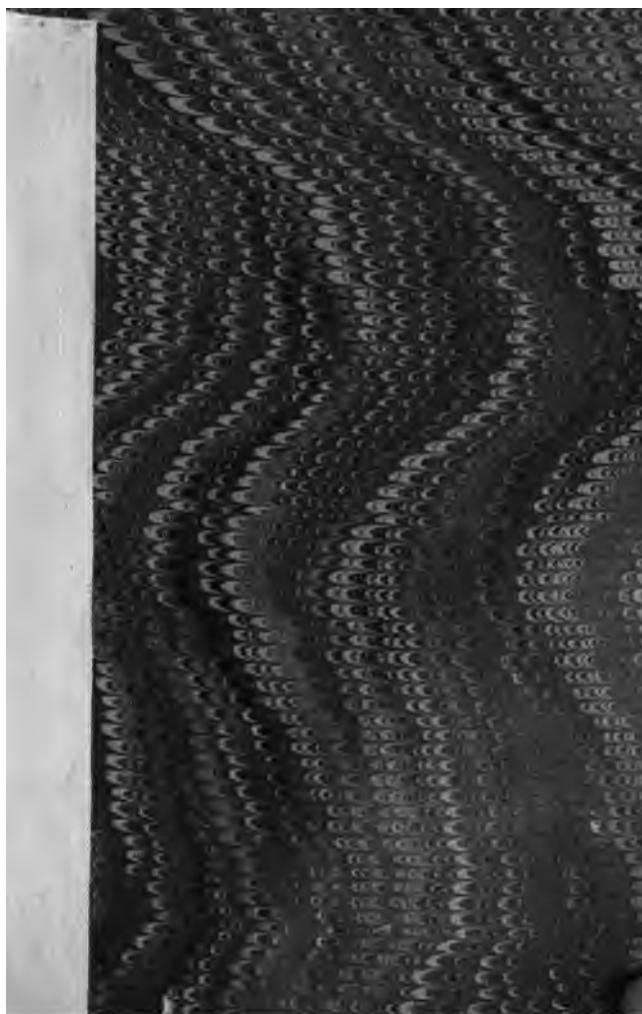
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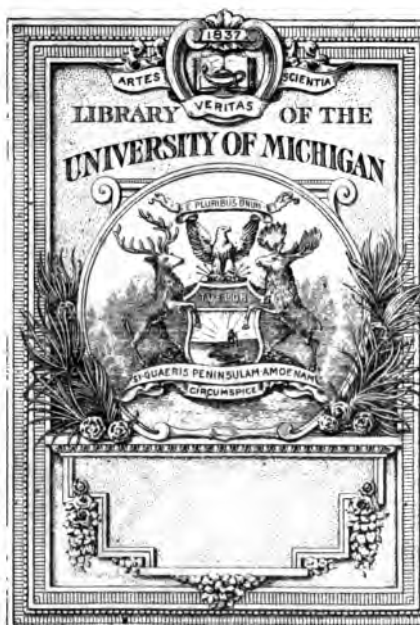
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W. C. EDWARDS

Dr. P. P. Lawrence.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE POSSESSION OF THE RIGHT HON. JOHN WILSON CROKER.

Published by J. Smith, 57, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

THE LIVES
OF
THE MOST EMINENT
BRITISH
PAINTERS, SCULPTORS,
AND
ARCHITECTS.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

VOL. VI.

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PREFACE.

My undertaking is now concluded, and I have the agreeable duty of thanking my friends for their aid, the public for its kindness, and critics for much mildness and forbearance. I at first imagined that three volumes, or at most four, would hold all I had to say ; but as the work advanced, new sources of intelligence were opened. What was intended for a sketch took a more important form, and I soon perceived that I required more room, and greater fulness, both of narration and remark. The deaths, too, of such men as Lawrence and Jackson obliged me to extend my plan ; nor am I sure that I have yet admitted all artists of merit and genius into my volumes.

In tracing the lives and delineating the characters of the chief men of our native school of art, I have endeavoured to be scrupulously impartial : it was my wish to speak warmly of merits and candidly of faults, and in no way to sacrifice my own opinion in matters either of taste or conduct. Yet,

with all my care, I have, I fear, committed many mistakes. I had to gather intelligence from various sources, written and oral, and seek original matter on all sides. In extracting a consistent narrative from my many-coloured materials, I have not, I am afraid, always reconciled contradictions, or taken the true version of a story which had many variations.

I have incurred obligations to many friends during the course of the work, but to none so much as to Mr. Lockhart, who not only suggested the undertaking, but, when in town, has been so kind as to help me in its progress, often pruning what was redundant, and bringing light to what was obscure. Mr. Southey has likewise aided me, and by his too favourable expressions regarding the merits of my first volume, encouraged me much with the rest. Lord Dover also has afforded me, in many cases, the advantage of his taste and knowledge. To the friendship of Sir Andrew Halliday I am indebted for all that is interesting in the life of Cosway; and the communications of those accomplished antiquaries, Mr. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, of Hoddom, and Mr. David Laing, of Edinburgh, were invaluable to me when treating of artists of Scottish birth. Of the members of the Royal Academy, my friends, Mr. Chantrey and Mr. Wilkie, have assisted me the most; not so much with direct communications,

as by conversations through which I obtained the advantage of their taste and experience.

I now bid farewell to a work which has occupied me many an evening hour. Had I been in a situation to bestow undivided attention on it, I might have rendered it worthier of my subject. As it is, I hope the public will not be less generous than a distinguished painter, who, in writing of the first five volumes, said, "I differ from you as to some small things, but I cordially agree with you in the general estimate of character, and judgment of works of genius."

A. C.

London, February 28. ¹⁷⁶⁹1833.

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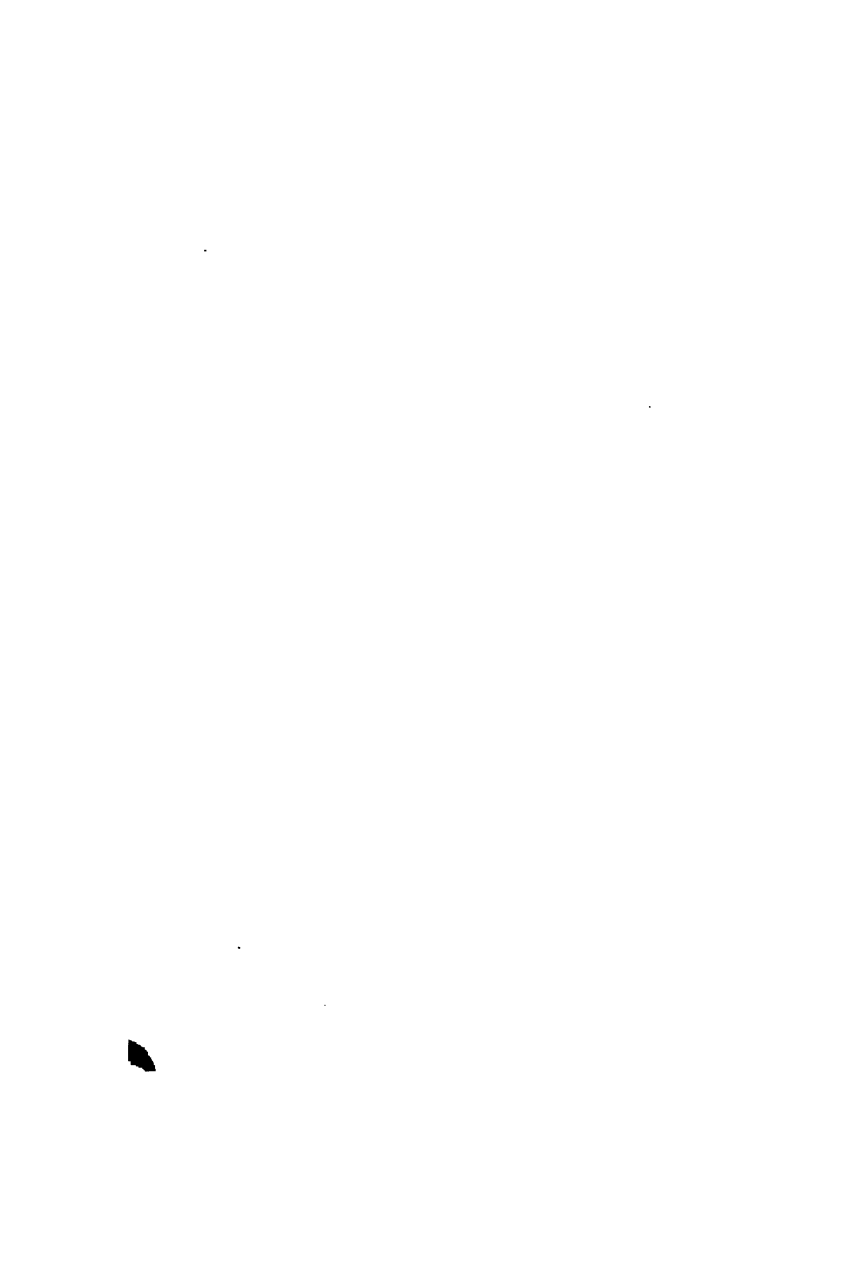
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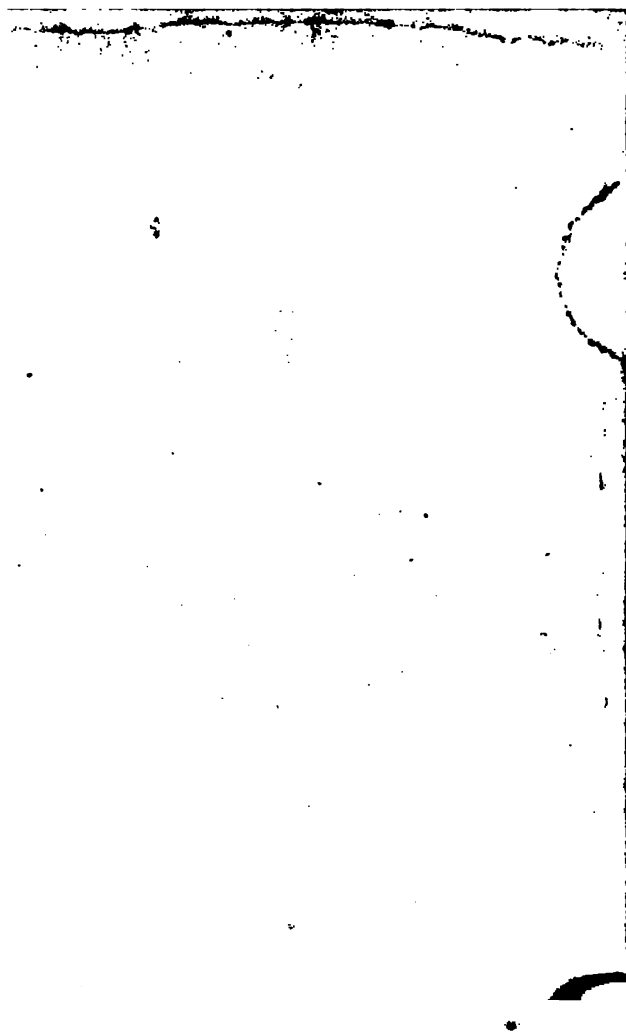
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Engraved by W. Edwards

R. BOSWELL, B.A.

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LIVES
OF
THE BRITISH PAINTERS.

COSWAY.

RICHARD COSWAY was born, in the year 1740, at Tiverton, in Devonshire. His father was master of the public school there; his uncle was for some time mayor; and the family (originally Flemish) owned considerable property in the town and neighbourhood. One of his ancestors, a person of substance, and skilful in the manufacture of woollen cloth, emigrated, in the reign of Elizabeth, from the Low Countries, to escape oppression of body and soul under the fierce Duke of Alva; and, establishing the woollen manufacture at Tiverton, grew rich and prosperous, and purchased the estate of Combe-Willis, within some five miles of that place. The connection of the family with Flanders, and a taste for works of art, which it seems some of the elder Cosways possessed, had brought various pictures

of the Flemish school, among the rest two from the hand of Rubens, to Tiverton; and it is alleged that the sight of these awoke a love for painting in the mind of Richard, which, at first, met with but little sympathy at his father's fireside. The master of Tiverton school saw, with astonishment, his son, at the age of seven years, neglecting his lessons, devoting all his time to what he called "the idle pursuit of drawing." Admonition first, and then chastisement, were employed without effect; and it was only on the interposition of his uncle, the mayor, and a judicious neighbour, of the name of Oliver Peard, that the boy was permitted to make drawings during such periods as could be spared from his education. In process of time the rude outlines of the young artist became more elegant and regular; and by the time he was thirteen years old, his sketches were of such promise as to warrant his removal to London, where he was placed, first, under Hudson, with whom Reynolds had studied, and next under Shipley, who kept a drawing-school in the Strand. The expense of his studies was defrayed by his uncle, the mayor, and by Oliver Peard; nor did Cosway prove unworthy of their care and generosity: his skill in drawing became so great, that in the course of a few years he obtained no less than five premiums, some of five, and one of ten guineas, from the Society of Arts. The first was conferred when he was but fourteen years old; the last when he was under four-and-twenty.

Of the early days of the artist, Smith gives, in his own rough style, a very different account:—

"Cosway," says he, "when a boy, was noticed by Shipley, the proprietor of the drawing-school in the Strand, who took him to wait upon the students, and carry in the tea and coffee, which Mr. Shipley's housekeeper was allowed to provide, and for which she charged three-pence per head. The students, among whom were Nollekens and my father, good temperedly gave Dick, for so he was called, instructions in drawing, and also advised him, finding him to have some talent, to try for a prize in the Society of Arts." Smith must have had this account from his father, or from Nollekens; but from enquiring among the connections of Cosway I have learnt nothing which confirms the story — much that contradicts it. That a youth related to opulent families, and supported in his studies by the voluntary aid of admiring neighbours, should have been obliged to become a waiter in such a place as Shipley's, is hardly credible, and must be rejected as a fiction. There is more truth in the statement, that "he was employed to make drawings of heads for the shops, as well as fancy miniatures, and free subjects for snuff-boxes for the jewellers, mostly from ladies whom he knew; and from the money he gained, and the gaiety of the company he kept, he rose from one of the dirtiest of boys to one of the smartest of men."

This very natural change arose from the money he made in the art of miniature painting, in which he was acknowledged a master. The skill with which he could bring an ill-formed face within the rules of beauty, communicate lustre to eyes naturally dull, and colour to cheeks from

which the rose had fled, and yet maintain enough of likeness to the original, was not likely to go unrewarded. To rise from indigence to affluence, and step out of the company of indifferent daubers into that of lords and ladies of high degree, could not be accomplished, Cosway imagined, without putting on airs of superiority, and a dress rivalling that of an eastern ambassador. His affectation was not unobserved by his brethren: his fine clothes, splendid house, and black servant, were offences after their kind; and caricaturists gratified their spite and replenished their pockets by satirising him as the "Macaroni Miniature Painter." The man whom Dighton drew, and Earlom engraved, was likely soon to be heard of; and their united lampoon upon him, as "Billy Dimple sitting for his Picture" (now very rare), had no small effect at the time. Nor has Smith failed to favour us with a sitting of Cosway in his days of state and solemnity; he is a master in wardrobe painting. "I have often," said he, "seen Cosway at the elder Christie's picture sales, full dressed in his sword and bag, with a small three-cornered hat on the top of his powdered toupée, and a mulberry silk coat profusely embroidered with scarlet strawberries." Such was the dress of those whom princes delighted to honour, before change, as with a besom, swept away, among some worse and many worthier things, all this magpie splendour.

The consequence which Cosway thus early in life assumed, he was prepared to maintain both by his talents and assiduity. He seems not to have coveted earnestly the applause which follows the

painting of works of a high historic order, though he tried his success in that unprofitable style as well as Barry and Fuseli: he aspired rather to reign king in the little pleasing paradise of miniature; to gratify the ladies by the softer graces of his pencil was, he thought, honour enough; and in that kind of flattery no one excelled him. He had, however, other claims to public notice; his drawings from the antique were graceful and accurate: to copy with the pencil the fine flowing outline of a Grecian statue, and catch the true proportions, require a fine eye and a skilful hand; and Cosway seems to have had both. This sort of practice he acquired in the Duke of Richmond's gallery. His outlines caught the eye of Bartolozzi, who, with Cipriani, pronounced them admirable. And as it was believed that Reynolds carried the grand style of Michael Angelo into his full-sized portraits, so was it thought that Cosway introduced a touch of the grace and dignity of the antique into his fashionable miniatures: his commissions augmented accordingly. It is well observed by one of his surviving friends, that "he inclined more to the neat, the graceful, and the lovely, than towards the serene, the dignified, and the stern; and though his admiration of the antique was great, this was modified by his continual studying of living nature, and from a taste for whatever was soft and elegant."

Besides the income which arose from his fine drawings and his numerous miniatures, Cosway derived occasional sums from old paintings which he purchased, repaired, and sold to such cus-

tomers as had galleries to fill or rooms to decorate. This kind of trade, in skilful hands, has been found lucrative; but Cosway, whatever he might earn by his pencil or by his bargaining, was no hoarder: his outlay kept pace with his income. He had expensive tastes: he was fond of old weapons, old armour, old books, and old furniture; and delighted in entertaining his friends splendidly. He wrought, or, as artists prefer to say, studied hard; but he also lived hard: it was his pleasure to spend his money in the society of high and dissipated people, who laughed in secret at his folly, and, while they encouraged his extravagance to his face, derided it without mercy behind his back. They swallowed his champagne, gambled him out of the price of a dozen miniatures at a sitting, and then entertained their friends by giving caricatured accounts of his conduct and conversation, to which the lampoon of Dighton was but a joke. Cipriani used to relate, that though Cosway would pass a whole night, nay, nights, in this kind of frivolous society, he never found him in bed, let him call ever so early next morning. He rose with remorse at heart: laboured hard by day to repair the waste of the night; and formed, all the while, good resolutions, which dispersed of their own accord when the lamps were lighted, and the hour of appointment approached. Nor did he escape reproach from others, or from himself, for worse transgressions: he was sometimes employed in embodying the loose ideas of licentious associates, and in furnishing lascivious miniatures for snuff-boxes, sold in secret, and produced in com-

pany by men whose imaginations are, perhaps, the least delicate parts about them. These offences, however, it is to be hoped, were committed seldom; at all events, they happened early in life: and it must also be borne in mind, that manners were, in those days, less restrained than now: our fathers had not our delicacy of eye and purity of speech, though, probably, nothing behind us in any of the essentials of virtue.

Amid all this waste and vanity, Cosway was rising in reputation. In 1771 he was elected Royal Academician; and imagining it necessary to support his new dignity by fresh efforts of his pencil, he sent to the exhibition, for several successive years, a few pictures chiefly of that kind which pertain to portrait and poetry. The Rinaldo and Armida were suggested by Tasso, and the heads were supplied by two of his titled sitters: a miniature in the character of Cupid was of the same stamp; so was the Child enacting St. John. The "Portraits of a Lady and her Son in the character of Venus and Cupid;" the "Madonna and Child," portraits; and the "Portrait of a Young Lady in the character of Psyche," explain themselves. He exhibited various others; but these were the chief. Their beauty and elegance brought many admirers, and raised a little envy in the bosoms of some of his brethren. It is true that they spoke with compassion of Cosway's glossy and feeble portraits, with scorn of his foppery in dress, and were not a little sarcastic on the fine company which he kept; but then they lamented the sad taste of

the times more, and the want of judgment in the high places, and thanked their stars that they had too much genius to be popular. All this Cosway, perhaps, did not know, and certainly could care little for : his good opinion of his own merits covered him as a cloak ; and, besides, he was not likely to set down the admiration of peeresses and princes to his want of merit. The houses in which he lived have been held in remembrance. When the caricature of the Macaroni Miniature Painter came out, he lived in Orchard Street, Portman Square : when he kept a black servant, and wore a coat of mulberry silk, ornamented with scarlet strawberries, his house was in Berkeley Street ; and when he became a husband, and had the Prince of Wales for his patron, he lived in Pall Mall, in the middle lodging of that extensive house built for the Duke of Schomberg.

There were two events in the life of Cosway which had, for a long while, a great influence over him : one was the familiar notice — the painter called it friendship — of the Prince of Wales ; and the other his marriage with Maria Hadfield, a young lady of talent and beauty. The notice of the prince was pleasing to the man and to the artist. The staid stateliness and quaker-like sobriety of the court of George III. and the gaudy magnificence and reckless gaiety of Carlton House in those days, contrasted like the light and darkness of an historical picture. I mean not to say that Cosway was among the number of those who joined the Prince in his

wilder sallies ; nevertheless he was of his train, and voyaged with him for a time, —

“ Down pleasure’s stream with swelling sails.”

During this period of court favour Cosway married Maria Hadfield. She was a native of Italy, but of English parentage ; and, besides her wit and beauty, had such taste and skill in art as rendered her worthy of the notice, when but eighteen years old, of Reynolds and Fuseli, and other masters of the English school. In addition to these attractions there was something romantic in her story. Her father kept a hotel for the accommodation of travellers on the Arno ; and such was his prosperity, that he was enabled to live, in process of time, like a wealthy gentleman. Four of his babes died suddenly and in succession ; and when Maria, who was the fifth, was born, a trusty servant resolved to keep watch, for foul play was surmised. One day a favourite maid-servant went into the nursery, took the child in her arms, and dandling it, said, “ Pretty little creature ! I have sent four before thee to heaven : I hope to send thee also.” Being instantly seized and interrogated, she owned that she had destroyed the other four children out of love, — for of such was the kingdom of heaven. She was imprisoned for life. Maria was educated in a convent, where she learned music and drawing. On her return home she studied painting, went to Rome for a time, and became acquainted with the first artists, Battomi, Mengs, Maron, Fuseli, Wright of Derby, and contemplated art in the noble sculptures and sublime paintings of

the palaces and churches. On the death of her father she desired to go into a nunnery; but her mother, to wean her from this wild scheme, brought her to England, where conversations with Angelica Kauffman shook her faith in the nunnery, and her marriage with Cosway soon sealed her conversion. From this time it becomes the duty of the biographer, in relating the history of the painter, to remember the genius of his wife.

Her foreign manners and extreme youth induced Cosway to keep his wife secluded till she mastered the language, and, by intercourse with intimate friends, acquired a knowledge of society. She studied art, too, under her new instructor; and with such success, that almost the first time she was seen in public she was pointed out as the lady who had painted some of the most lovely miniatures in the Royal Academy Exhibition. Her reputation was made at once: nothing was talked of but the great youth and great talent of Mrs. Cosway; and one half of the carriages which stopped at her husband's door contained sitters ambitious of the honours of her pencil. The painter, however, was too proud a man to permit his wife — much as he admired her talents — to paint professionally: this, no doubt, was in favour of domestic happiness, but much against her success in art. The impulse which professional rivalry gives was wanting; and on works which were only to be seen by a few, she wrought with less feeling and care than what artists bestow on paintings which challenge public examination. This was, I have heard, not much

to the liking of Mrs. Cosway: she had a desire after excellence in art, and made sketches from Spenser and Shakspeare, Virgil and Homer, and longed to embody them in fine drawing and imperishable colours. When her portrait of the fair Duchess of Devonshire, which, by a refinement in flattery, was painted in the character of the Cynthia of Spenser, made its appearance, there was no little stir. The likeness was excellent, and the poetic feeling not unworthy of the poet.

Cosway, however inexorable in regard to painting, was more gentle in the matter of music, of which Maria was passionately fond; and, as he had a handsome house, and a good income, he allowed her to indulge in those splendid nuances called evening parties.

The guests were numerous, and of all ranks and callings that had any pretensions to the elegant; — the writer of the last new poem; the speaker of the last best speech in the Commons; some rising star, real or imaginary, in art; the man who made the last miraculous escape from shipwreck, or who had walked into the remotest latitude: in short, all the lions of London were there, to see and be seen. Lady Lyttelton, the Hon. Mrs. Damer, the Countess of Aylesbury, Lady Cecilia Johnston, and the Marchioness of Townshend, were her intimate friends: General Paoli, Lord Sandys, Lord Erskine, and the Prince of Wales, were not unfrequent visitors; and when she desired to have something worthy of public notice, the foreign ambassadors were ready

to swell the number of those who listened to the music of "the charming Mrs. Cosway."

Cosway found the house in Pall Mall was unsuitable for the display of his works and his finery, and removed to one more roomy at the entrance of Stratford Place, Oxford Street. Now it happened that the figure of a lion was attached to this new residence; and as the painter was a little man, and, as Smith asserts, "not much unlike a monkey in the face," some wag, whom he had offended, stuck these lines on his door:—

"When a man to a fair for a show brings a lion,
'Tis usual a monkey the sign-post to tie on;
But here the old custom reversed is seen,
For the lion's without, and the monkey's within."

To take the sting from this dull conceit, the artist removed to No. 20. in the same street, and proceeded to fit it up in a style of uncommon elegance. "His new house," says Smith, "he fitted up in so picturesque, and, indeed, so princely a style, that I regret drawings were not made of the general appearance of each department; for many of the rooms were more like scenes of enchantment pencilled by a poet's fancy, than any thing perhaps before displayed in a domestic habitation. His furniture consisted of ancient chairs, couches, and conversation stools, elaborately carved and gilt, and covered with the most costly Genoa velvets; escritaires of ebony, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and rich caskets for antique gems, exquisitely enamelled and adorned with onyxes, opals, rubies, and emeralds.

There were also cabinets of ivory curiously wrought; mosaic tables set with jasper, blood-stone, and lapis-lazuli, having their feet carved into the claws of lions and eagles; screens of old raised oriental Japan; massive musical clocks, richly chased with or molu and tortoise-shell; ottomans superbly damasked; Persian and other carpets, with corresponding hearth-rugs, bordered with ancient family crests and armorial ensigns in the centre, and rich hangings of English tapestry. The chimney-pieces were carved by Banks, and were further adorned with the choicest bronzes, models in wax, and terracotta; the tables covered with old score, blue, Mandarin, Nankin, and Dresden china; and the cabinets were surmounted with crystal cups, adorned with the York and Lancaster roses, which might probably have graced the splendid banquets of the proud Wolsey. His specimens of armour were truly rich." To give life to this elaborate picture, of elaborate things, I may add, that Smith once saw the painter in his princely mansion standing "at the fireside upon one of Madame Pompadour's rugs, leaning against a chimney-piece dedicated to the Sun, the ornaments of which were sculptured by Banks, giving instructions to a picture dealer to bid for some of the Merly drawings at the memorable sale of Ralph Willett, Esq."

Amid all this splendour, Cosway could not be called happy. His skill was still improving, his prices high, and his sitters numerous; nor had any one appeared to excel him in his own peculiar line. The Prince, too, continued his visits,

nor had any one forsaken him in whose friendship he put trust. But he had begun to detect, it is said, among those who seemed most charmed with his music and cheered with his wines, a disposition to ridicule his taste, and laugh at his pretensions. This, to a man who set his heart on the smiles of the world, could not be otherwise than painful. He heard, besides, that sundry of his brethren rated his talents humbly, and considered him as living by the vanity of mankind rather than by his own powers of imagination; but what affected him most was the failing health of his wife: the climate of England was more churlish than that of her native Arno; and amid the smoke and bustle of London she sighed for the pure air and sunny scenes of Italy. He carried her to Flanders and to Paris. One day, as he walked with her in the gallery of the Louvre, he was surprised at the extent of naked wall, and said, "Maria, my cartoons would look well here, — and, to say the truth, they seem much wanted." These were works of Julio Romano: Cosway prized them highly, and had refused a large price from Russia, saying, he would not sell works of elegance to barbarians. He now offered them as a gift to the French king: they were accepted and hung up in the Louvre; and four splendid pieces of the Gobelines tapestry were bestowed on the painter in token of royal gratitude: these he presented to the Prince of Wales. During this visit to Paris, he painted the Duchess of Orleans and family, and the Duchess of Polignac, for the Duchess of Devonshire; yet he appears to have refused to paint either the King or Queen; saying,

he was there for the health of his wife and his own amusement, and not to study and toil.

The health of Mrs. Cosway seemed improved by the air of France; and, on returning to London, his sitters and her evening parties once more cheered them for a season. But she soon felt that sinking of the spirits coming on which no music could raise or society relieve; and, accompanied by her brother, who had gained as a student in painting the Academy's gold medal, she departed for Rome. Rome, however, she was too much indisposed to reach; and, halting by the way, regained, in a month or two, much of the health she had lost. She remained in Italy nearly three years, expecting every spring and autumn the coming of her husband; at length she commenced her journey home. But she neither found health nor happiness in London: the illness and death of an only daughter threw her upon art once more. To mitigate her grief, she painted several large pictures for chapels, and afterwards went to France, without regard of the war which had commenced between that country and England, and executed, what she considered her master-piece, a work containing all the pictures in the gallery of the Louvre. The turn which the war took interfered with her stay at Paris; and she was persuaded by Cardinal Fesch to establish a college for the education of young ladies at Lyons: this plan was interrupted; and, with her husband's approbation, she passed into Italy, and formed a college at Lodi similar to that which she planned at Lyons. On the establishment of peace she returned to England.

Changes, too, had taken place in that land ; but none which affected her own peace, though they disturbed the equanimity of her husband.

Cosway, it appears, was one of those sanguine men who perceived in the French Revolution the dawn of an empire of reason and taste, in which genius and virtue alone would be worshipped : many of his friends indulged in the same pleasing fancies, nay, the feeling infected men of rank as well as talent.* It was not to be expected that the Prince of Wales would join in sentiments which affected the crown to which he was heir ; though, like the Prince Hal of Shakspeare, he had been wild and extravagant, he now looked forward to "doucefully fill a throne," as a northern poet had foretold he would live to do, and had begun to grow more select in his company. The increasing infirmities of his father rendered this necessary ; and when he became Regent, Cosway, like many others, looked in vain for the man of other years. The friends of the painter, however, imputed, in part at least, his loss of princely favour to his deficiency in the arts of a courtier, and the native pride of his heart. "He thought himself overlooked and neglected : conscious of his abilities, he disdained to stoop, or entreat, or flatter ; and imagining that his enemies had got the better of him, he neglected his profession, by which he had risen, and looked with suspicion even on his firmest friends. As his own character was open and generous, his disappoint-

* I have seen a curious letter by an English nobleman, signed "Citizen."

ment was the bitterer ; he made no attempt to retrieve his influence with the Prince, and he never retrieved it." These are the words of one who knew Cosway well, and who thinks he had occasion to say with Scripture, " Put not your trust in princes."

His latter years were passed in pain, bodily and mental ; a paralytic stroke deprived him of the use of his right hand, and with it cut off one chief source of pleasure, the power of drawing. His wife watched patiently over him, and tried to render pleasant the many sad hours he was now obliged to spend without other solace ; and by her assiduity and affection atoned for the years which she had sojourned out of his household, making experiments in pictures and ladies' colleges. She considered her solicitude to be amply rewarded by the feeling of performing her duty, and by hearing her husband speak of art. His conversation was, to her at least, gay and imaginative. He loved to look at his collections of drawings, at his old armour, at his innumerable curiosities, and talk about the ancient masters of the calling, and imagine what they would say were they now to revisit the earth, and see the civilised grown savage, and the savage civilised. Nay, he sometimes startled such visitors as did not know his way, by saying, with a serious air, that he had just had an interview with Praxiteles and Apelles, and the former recommended a closer study of the living figure to the English academy, and the other a less gaudy style of colour. These things, to the dull and unimaginative, sounded strange and ridiculous ;

while others thought them lessons worth remembering. Once, as he sat at the dinner of the Royal Academy, he turned to one of his brethren, and said, "Pitt, while he lived, discouraged genius; he has seen his error now; he paid me a visit this morning, and said, 'Cosway, the chief fault I committed on earth was in not encouraging your talents.'" — "Ay, that was merely to soothe your vanity," said his friend; "for Pitt, after he had seen you, called on me, and said, 'Now, mark! Cosway will tell at your dinner to-day that I waited on him and expressed contrition for not having employed his talents, — don't believe one word he says, for he will tell nothing but his own absurd inventions.'" "I have heard Cosway relate conversations," says Smith, "which he held with King Charles I., so seriously, that I firmly believe he considered every thing he uttered to be strictly true." It is a pity but Smith could have returned this civility by reading to him a page or two from his life of Nollekens.

An old and esteemed friend, Miss Udney, called one fine morning to give the ailing man an airing: he was better than usual, and gayer, and said kind words to his servants, as they supported him to the carriage. In some twenty minutes or so, his wife heard the sound of the returning wheels: she hastened down stairs, and found her husband lifeless. This third and last attack came on him on the way to Edgeware; he fell back, and died without a groan, on the 4th day of July, 1821, aged eighty years. He was buried in Mary-le-bone, and a monument raised

to his memory, in which Art, Taste, and Genius are made to lament his loss, in the terms of the following indifferent epitaph:—

“ Art weeps, Taste mourns, and Genius drops the tear
O'er him so long they loved who slumbers here.
While colours last, and time allows to give
The all-resembling grace, his name shall live.”

In person, Cosway was small and well made: he had an important and bustling air; affected the polished gentleman, and the man who was the Prince's friend; loved to be painted with a hat and feather on, and to be spoken of as an artist worthy of taking rank with Reynolds and Rubens. He long hesitated whether he should be buried in his native Devonshire, or be placed in the vault with Rubens at Antwerp. Humbler thoughts, however, came over him on hearing a sermon from Wesley, on death and the grave. He followed a funeral into the vaults of a London church, and seeing the gilt mountings, and the orderly way in which the coffins were arranged, said, “ I prefer this to Antwerp or St. Paul's: bury me here.” He was in his nature generous and kind. Mrs. Cosway said, the number of letters sent to him, requesting pecuniary aid, was incredibly great. He gave freely, and promised more. Borrowers who never repaid him, and sitters, from whom he never asked payment, formed a long and a not untitled list. His execution was rapid: he often finished miniatures, at three sittings of half an hour each; and when he sat down to dinner, would boast that he had despatched during the day twelve or fourteen

sitters. His knowledge of the human figure, as it appeared to the sculptors of old, and as he found it in life, was equal or superior to that of most of his contemporaries. His outlines were accurate and elegant: his manner was partly from the Roman School and partly from his own experience; and he considered it a beauty in his compositions, that they resembled more the deep sober hue of Italian painting, than the gaudy glow of that of England. As his miniatures are chiefly confined to the chamber and the cabinet, the works of Cosway are less widely known than they deserve. His fame is fading; such must be the fate of all who paint only the living faces around them, and seek not to embody sentiments familiar to the human heart, and which affect all mankind. Cosway had lived too expensively to leave much wealth behind him. His accomplished widow still survives him, and resides at her beloved Lodi, where she has established her Ladies' College, and is widely known and respected.

DAVID ALLAN.

GENIUS is natural to all parts of the earth; lives where it chooses; works in its own way, and to please its own spirit; and is sometimes content with local fame. Of this class of unambitious men was David Allan, fondly called by some of his countrymen the Scottish Hogarth. But though his fame is chiefly confined to Scotland, and though it was his pleasure to aim at little beyond delineating the humble tenants of the cottage and the shieling, he is not unworthy of a place amongst those artists who had higher aims, and whose fame has been farther diffused. He was the second son of David Allan and Janet Gullan, his wife; and was born February 13. 1744, at Alloa, in Stirlingshire, where his father held the situation of shoremaster. His birth was attended by mournful and somewhat romantic circumstances:—"In consequence," says the family account, "of a fright which she got, and the delicate state of her health, he was born in the sixth or seventh month of his mother's pregnancy, who died a few days afterwards, and no nurse could be found whom he could suck, in the neighbourhood, owing to the smallness of his mouth. At length a suitable one being heard

of, the child, which was both little and weak, being wrapped up carefully, was laid in a basket among cotton, and carried by a man on horse-back, to be suckled by a woman, who lived at some distance from Alloa. In consequence of a recent storm, the snow was lying very deep on the ground; the horse stumbled, and both the rider and his tender charge fell. The infant was thrown out of the basket, and received so severe a cut on his head, that the mark it left remained till his death."

The tender care of his nurse, and the sympathy of a neighbouring lady, who frequently took the poor babe into her carriage, when she went out an airing, brought strength to his delicate frame: he in due time returned to his father's house, more vigorous than had been hoped for, and with little or no appearance of premature birth upon him. At school he acquired, without being remarked for either dulness or capacity, reading, writing, and arithmetic,—the three solid foundations on which knowledge rears her structures; and that he acquired any more in later years has not been asserted. When he grew up, intercourse with society, and that insight into human nature which his profession demands, enabled him to fill a respectable station, to the satisfaction of the inhabitants of Edinburgh, during a period when skilful judges were not scarce among them. He was too modest to claim scholarship, from a smattering of Latin picked up at the parish school.

The love of art, which seems in some as natural as flowers to the field, came accidentally,

we have been told, upon Allan. When very young, some eight years old or so, he got one of his feet burnt, which kept him from the school, and likewise confined him to the house. His father, a man averse to idleness, said, with a smile, "You idle rogue, you cannot go to school, and are losing the little you know. Here, take this piece of chalk, and write on the floor." The poor boy did as he was desired; but, tiring of writing, he began to amuse himself with drawing figures, — rude, indeed, and uncouth, but which pleased his own fancy. From this time the chalk was seldom out of his hand: he drew houses, birds, and beasts; and before he was well enough to return to school, had made some attempts to delineate the human figure. All this seems, for a time at least, to have been unheeded by his family. His father married a second wife: and his mother-in-law had children of her own to attend to. It was left to the schoolmaster of the parish to find out the bent of Allan's genius; and the circumstances of the discovery were to himself otherwise than pleasant.

It seems that the schoolmaster was something old, near-sighted, and vain. It was his practice to pace along the floor among his scholars, dressed in a long tartan gown, with a tartan night-cap on his head, and a rod of correction in his hand, which he applied, in times of irritation, with much severity. David, now eleven years old, was so struck with the ludicrous figure which the teacher made while punishing with difficulty some stout refractory boys, that he sketched the

group on his slate, and exhibited it to his companions: the startling laugh which this occasioned drew the attention of the *Dominie*, who, though sand-blind, detected the resemblance; and, incensed at being caricatured among his scholars, bestowed a smart chastisement on the culprit, and then complained to his father. Old Allan, when he heard of the talents and the petulance of his boy,

— “knew not whether to rejoice or mourn.”

It was necessary, however, to withdraw him from the school, which he did, admonishing him, at the same time, for insulting one whom he should rather have honoured. “I could nae help it,” said little David; “he looked sae queer: I made it like him, and a’ for fun.”

The story of the caricature was told to all who enquired why the boy had left the school; and, amongst others, to Mr. Stuart, Collector of Customs at Alloa, who had the sagacity to perceive something like genius in his rude attempts. He advised, at once, that he should be placed in the academy of Glasgow, then newly established by the patriotic printers, Robert and Andrew Foulis. About this time a new spirit began to appear in Scotland. At first the promise was great; the enthusiasm of many young men knew no bounds, and the seats of the Academy were all but filled with students eager to gain a name in art. The establishment wanted, however, influence to support and skill to direct it. Foulis was but a fine printer and a *connois-*

seur: high examples of historical art were not then so abundant as now; the public eye had not been familiarised with those miracles of genius, native and foreign, which now crowd our galleries; in short, the country was not in a condition to profit by the boon so readily bestowed by those enterprising brethren. The Western Academy had, however, shown no symptoms of decay, when, on the 22d of February, 1755, young Allan was apprenticed to Robert Foulis, to learn the arts of drawing, painting, and engraving. Of his success in these branches of art his future works must speak. Much that he performed during his servitude was necessarily of a preliminary nature; yet he made such progress as enabled him, before he left the Academy, to sketch a picture in oil colours, showing the interior of the painting room, with the students at their tasks, and Foulis giving his instructions. This picture is now in Newhall House, near Edinburgh. Allan always spoke with warmth of the kindness of Robert and Andrew Foulis; and when in process of time his own name had risen, and their fortunes, from speculations in art, had sunk, he did all that he could to sustain them. He left Glasgow with a high character for talent and steadiness.

Allan had been born on the lands of the Erskines of Mar, one of the most ancient families in the North, and who, in their prosperous days, loved to encourage genius wherever it was found. On his return to his father's house, he was introduced to the family of Erskine by Lord Cathcart, whose seat was in the same district.

Something like a meeting of the influential and the tasteful of the neighbourhood seems to have been held on the occasion, in which the merits of the young painter were discussed, and all agreed that he deserved to be sent to Italy for improvement. We have known very rash judgments formed in such matters, and seen young men sent to Rome on the fruits of a subscription who had not talent for a tailor. In the case of Allan, however, the result was more fortunate. He heard of the kindness of his friends with no little gladness of spirit. As his means were small, his arrangements were soon made; and in the summer of 1764 he was on his way to the Eternal City, with high hopes in his heart, and sundry letters of credit and introduction in his pocket. "We need not give you a letter," said his patrons, "to Gavin Hamilton (one of the Hamiltons of Murdiston, in Lanarkshire); for he is the unsolicited friend of every deserving artist. Should his character be altered, let us know, and you shall have a regular introduction." This estimate of Hamilton's character was just: he aided Allan in every way that could be most acceptable to a youth of spirit and talent; and considered himself rewarded when, in process of time, his young friend gained, first, a silver medal for his skill in drawing; and, secondly, the gold medal of the Academy of St. Luke, for the best historical composition. He was the second Scotsman found worthy of such honour (Hamilton himself was the first).

The picture which gained him so acceptable a prize is one of great merit, both in conception and drawing, and certainly excels any thing

else, in the same style, which Allan ever painted. The subject is the old poetic dream of the "Origin of Painting; or the Corinthian Maid drawing the Shadow of her Lover." The youth is sitting; he keeps himself firm with his left hand, extends his right gently round the waist of his mistress, and holds his face in repose: the maid sits on his knee, places a lamp, with a clear steady flame on one side, touches his chin modestly with her left hand to keep it in its position, and with her right guides the pencil along the outline of his face, which the light delineates in shadow on the wall. There is happy elegance and serene grace about the group which have seldom been surpassed; and I have heard Wilkie praise it as one of the best told stories that colour and canvass ever united to relate. Some of those suspicious people who never believe that genius works for itself, whispered that Hamilton had a hand in it; but this must have been uttered in ignorance of Gavin's character and talent: he was incapable of practising such delusion; and the group, in outline and in breadth, bears the marks of a very different hand. It was engraved skillfully by Cunego, and the painter's name made known far and wide.

How long Allan remained in Italy has not been settled with certainty. All we *know* is, that in 1764 he left the Academy of Glasgow; and that in 1777 he was in London. How he had employed himself during his stay abroad is equally a matter of speculation. That he painted "The Prodigal Son" for Lord Cathcart, "Hercules and Omphale" for Erskine of Mar, and made four humorous sketches

of Rome during the Saturnalia of the Carnival, is well enough known : but these, and others which might be named, together with numerous drawings in chalks from some of the old masters, could not well occupy ten or eleven years. It must, however, be borne in mind, that the manufacture of paintings wearing the lineament and hue of Raphael, Titian, Correggio, and other eminent hands, was carried in those days to an astonishing extent. The picture-dealers who supplied our galleries with the simulated commodity were always on the look-out for young adventurers, who had skill enough to make a fair copy, but not to make a good bargain, — and that Allan found employment of this kind there is little doubt. In truth, with the exception of Reynolds, almost all our English artists of those days eked out their allowance money by such labours.

Of his sketches of Roman folly during the Carnival we shall now speak. They are four in number :— 1. The Opening of the Carnival. 2. Politeness of Romans to Strangers. 3. Horse Race at Rome. 4. The Victor conducted in Triumph. — They seem to have been suggested by the election pictures of Hogarth, and abound in ludicrous situations and festive character. Some time afterwards, Paul Sandby engraved them; and the painter published descriptions in prose along with the prints. “The Carnival,” says Allan, “is the most cheerful and brilliant festival of the Romish Church. It begins on Twelfth Day. All distinctions of rank and station are confounded in an instant on the ringing of the great bell of the Capitol, the signal of

general permission to wear the mask in public. This licence is not abused. Although all Rome and its environs assemble in the streets, yet no bad manners nor riots interrupt the general festivity: priests and the religious orders are forbid the mask, and all imitation of the dresses of the Church are forbid. Neither fancy nor imagination are checked by this order: the characters of different nations, or of particular districts of Italy, are supported by groups of masks: triumphal cars are filled with ladies and gentlemen in elegant dresses; others, assuming the devices of poetic, or Gothic, or even of the heathen mythology, are conducted in triumph along the streets: bands of musicians and players go in the same manner: balconies and stages are filled with people, all contributing to the entertainment: a few guards are to be seen here and there, to preserve order. At the sound of the evening bell, all people unmask, and retire to the playhouse, the tavern, or their home; and all is peace again."

The first picture exhibits the effect of tolling the bell of the Capitol on the crowds assembled in the Piazza del Popolo and the Corso. "In the middle is a harlequin dancing with a Fraschetana girl; a lady and gentleman of Nettuno standing by; near these is a Jewish family, and a Punch joking with the wife; a modern painter in an ancient dress, showing the Obelisk to an English lady; behind, is a Knight of Malta; a sweetmeat crier; in the corner, a French grenadier in the Pope's service; a trumpeter on horseback in the skin of a bear. On the foreground is an improvisatore poet speaking extempore, accompanied

by the calasone instrument, with a dwarf begging. Near the Obelisk are two Italian barbers masked, imitating a French abbé and his valet; the abbé is looking with scorn at the car with music; a dignitary of the church, with his cross and muff, is walking near."

The second picture carries us before the palace Ruspoli in the Corso, where there is a good view of the horse-race and masquerade. The city marshal is in attendance as a kind of orderly to receive the commands of strangers admitted to the Ruspoli balcony: the whole scene is something motley. "A demon selling horns by the side of a girl in male attire; a flower-girl dressed in laurel leaves; a girl with a book and wand; a fortune-teller; a boy and dog masked." It is customary on occasions such as this for lawyers to appear in the dress of Punch, and enter into witty disputations; an encounter of this kind is represented; a notary is near with his papers; a *sbirro*, or spy, is at hand; a Roman tradesman wrapt in his cloak listens, while a Punch, gallanting a lady, is discovered to be a friar, and a boy writes his name on his back. The scene is altogether bustling and lifelike.

The third picture "exhibits the humours of a horse-race without riders: the horses are trained to the task; small spurs are fixed on their backs, so as to prick them forward; the narrowness of the street keeps them on the course, and they are stopped at the winning-post by blankets stretched before them: the natural spirit of the animal causes him to bite and kick, and strive as much as may be to get to the end of the street.

The governor stands ready to give the prize to the victor ; a man on an ass, as courier, in driving through the crowd, upsets an abbé gallanting a lady ; a gentleman passing, in aiding the latter, discovers her to be his wife ; one of the Pope's guards is smiling at the sight : near them is a Punch eating macaroni, Spaniards and Frenchmen saluting, a German drinking, and a Bolognese doctor offering his services. In the middle a Roman jockey is telling an English brother of his craft how barbarous it is to force horses to run with men on their backs ;"—the latter, of course, is laughing.

The fourth and last of the series shows the victor horse conducted to receive his covering of brocade, the reward of his triumph : a constable clears the way ; and the surrounding groups are as motley as in the other pieces.

Such were the pictures which this Scottish artist drew of Rome and her people, during their days of merriment and revelry. They approach, in their nature, to caricatures ; nor has he always been able, as some of my readers may have already guessed, to tell the story with the pencil, so clearly as he has described it with the pen. The Italian horseboy, who ridicules the barbarity of the English practice of running horses with a load of flesh, bones, boots, and spurs, on their backs, might be talking of anything else, for aught that his looks express to the contrary. This kind of delusion, however, is common to artists : they see sentiment and story, where others can only see figures ; and suppose they have made every thing plain,

when all, save to themselves, is mysterious. The Mercury putting off his sandals, on the title-page of the "Diversions of Purley," appeared in the eyes of Horne Tooke to be putting them on.

It is to these four prints, and some half dozen more, representing the manners and customs of the Italians, that Allan owes his name of the Scottish Hogarth. But the works on which his hope of fame depends are of a different character; they go deeply into the social feelings and rustic manners of his native land, and are not at all of the caricature race; in truth, they are akin to the inimitable works of Wilkie, of which they may be called the forerunners.

We are not prepared to say that Rome, with her paintings and statues, was beneficial to Allan. For the art which he studied there, his native land, when he returned to it, offered no market. Runciman had already experienced the delusion of all such dreams in Scotland; and Fuseli, his friend, was now proving, that England cared little for historic aspirations. That Allan, however, had indulged in hopes of historic fame, we have his own words to prove. He laments, in writing to Gavin Hamilton, that he found little or no opportunity of practising at home those precepts in painting which he learned while in Rome; and laments, as scores have since done, over the universal rage for mere portraiture. Let us dismiss then, without further remark, all his attempts in the classical department; all his copies of other men's works, whether in oil or in crayons; be silent about his landscapes, whether Scottish or Italian; nay, pass over, without ob-

servation, the two years during which he lived in London, manufacturing portraits; and convey him at once to Edinburgh, where, on the 14th of June, 1786, he was installed Master of the Academy of Arts, — a situation made vacant by the death of Runciman, and which his talents and acquirements seemed well fitted to adorn.

We have heard, however, that Allan, as master of the Academy, neither merited censure nor deserved praise. His style of drawing was even less correct than that of Runciman. His manners were winning; but he had not the art of exciting enthusiasm in his disciples. He filled this office with fair esteem and no more, for ten years.

His income was small, but his wants were few, and he had now leisure to plan and accomplish a work, which, we understand, had been present to his thoughts in early life. This was an edition of Allan Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*, illustrated with landscapes and groups, copied from the scene where the pastoral drama is laid, and from the peasantry of its glens. To do this well, he began the right way: he visited New Hall, Habbie's How, and every hill, dale, tree, stream, and cottage, which could be admitted into the landscape of the poet. He copied whatever seemed suitable, with fidelity; and as old men and women came wondering around him, he admitted their faces freely into his sketches, and made use of them afterwards, in his finished drawings. Glend's farm-house, the Monk's Burn, the Linn, the Washing Green, Habbie's How, New Hall House, and that little

breast-deep basin in the burn, called Peggy's Pool, were all carefully drawn. He was accompanied on this excursion by his friend, Captain Campbell of Glencross, whose looks he complimented in the face of Sir William Worthy. This was his way throughout. As the philosopher refused a candle, and desired to look at the moon by her own light, in like manner the artist imagined he ought to make the living inhabitants represent those shepherds and shepherdesses,—shrewd old men and sagacious old wives,—through whom the poet had given life and beauty to his landscape. But though the hills, woods, and streams, were those of which Ramsay had sung—the Paties and the Peggys, the Glauds and the Symons, the Mauses and the Madges of the pastoral, the creations of the Muse, in the spirit, but not in the express image, of rustic nature, were passed away and gone. He resolved, however, to make common-place peasants do the duty of poetic ones; “all the figures,” said his brother, “being copied from individual nature, are portraits.”

In his dedication to Hamilton, he says, “You must take these designs as a specimen of my occupations: the country gives no encouragement to heroic or historic subjects, and I am glad, therefore, to work in a humbler line; and, without descending to mean and low objects, give a correct representation of ordinary life, which may be made pleasing and instructive as well as morally useful. It seems to be essential towards the advancement of the art of painting in any country, that the country itself

should furnish good models, in nature, for the imitation of the artist. In this respect Great Britain has some advantages and some disadvantages. The youth of both sexes are, in general, well formed, well coloured, and of graceful proportions ; but in the middle stages of life, and in old age, our natural models are greatly deficient both in action and expression. We rarely see in this country a countenance like that of a Franciscan, or an Italian beggar, so full of character and expression, and so useful to the study of history painting. Yet the nature we have, with the assistance of ancient models, which may be easily procured by casts from the best of the Greek statues and busts, is fully sufficient for all the purposes of study, and might lead to great improvement even in historical painting, were that the general taste of the public."

If Allan expected to find poetic characters ready made, whose forms and expression he had only to copy into his pictures, he looked for what no one has hitherto found. But it cannot be denied that the hills and glens of Scotland abound with original characters: the universal polish, which society seems now in a fair way of receiving, and which wears the impress of originality out of man, as circulation smooths down the king's head on his coin, has not yet penetrated into the remote vales and pastoral districts: where twenty men are met together they present as many distinct characters. Of these Wilkie found more in Fife alone, than enabled him to establish an immortal

name: but *he* never dreamed that he should find them quite suited to his purpose; he saw from the first that he must tamper with nature a little—add to this, and withdraw from that—shed more light here, and give deeper shade there, than the green of Pitlessie, with all its rustic wealth of character, could furnish.

Nor is this the only point on which David Allan seems to have gone a wandering. “Ramsay, it is well known,” he observes, “composed his Gentle Shepherd in the neighbourhood of the Pentland Hills, where the shepherds to this day sing his songs, and the old people remember him reciting his verses. I have studied the same characters on the same spot, and I find that he has drawn faithfully, and with taste, from nature. This, likewise, has been my model of imitation; and while I attempted in these sketches to express the ideas of the poet, I have endeavoured to preserve the costume, as nearly as possible, by an exact delineation of such scenes and persons as he had in his eye.” The hills are eternal, and so are the streams, but man and his manners are as changeable as the clouds; and the costume of 1788, even in these Pentland glens, must have differed widely from that of 1720, when Ramsay’s poem was written.

On the whole, though he has not in all his delineations come quite up to the “rudely rustic witty grace” of Ramsay, he has shown much of the right spirit; if he has failed in personifying rustic elegance, he has been more successful in rustic humour; and in his cottage scenes he has not been often surpassed. These designs are

twelve in number ; of these four are but ordinary either in conception or drawing ; four more show original feeling, and an intimate acquaintance with rustic characters and rural things ; and the remaining four, particularly where age is depicted, would do honour to any painter of humble life. The Gentle Shepherd represents humble Scottish life ; and, with many defects, has been pronounced, by one whose judgment cannot be questioned, the only pastoral of nature in the language. The scenes are full of life and teeming with incident ; and the story which they contain has now kept its hold of the heart of Scotland for a hundred years.

The first print shows Patie admonishing Roger respecting success in love : he holds up his

“ Dainty whistle, with a pleasant sound,”

in his left hand, extends the other to the neglected pipe of his friend, and is supposed to be uttering those lines regarding wealth which have since become proverbial,—

“ He that has just enough can soundly sleep ;
The o’ercome only fashes folk to keep.”

Roger lies disconsolate on the grass, cannot look his companion in the face, and seems resolved to be miserable : his sheep are in the distance ; and his dog—one of the finest that we have seen—watches the flock, now disregarded by its master.

The second print introduces us to Peggy and Jenny : and here we begin to perceive the defi-

ciency of beauty in the actual shepherdesses of Pentland Glen: these maidens are clumsy creatures to say the least. The stream trotting past, the clothes laid out to whiten, and the waterfall in the distance, "which makes a singing din," are the best parts of the picture.

The third print brings Glaud and Symon on the stage: the latter is exclaiming, —

" And tent me now, auld boy,
I've gathered news will kittle your mind wi' joy."

Glaud, more fat and ample of paunch than becomes a Muirland farmer, sits on his sod seat, looking curiously into the face of Symon, who, calling in the aid of his thumb and finger to help his speech, demonstrates by both the occurrence of unlooked for things; his very hands seem to say, Put that and that together. The thin bent figure of the' one contrasts well with the jolly form and gladsome visage of the other: Symon is thoroughly Scotch; Glaud looks as if he had been a sojourner southward of the border.

The fourth design shows Allan in his strength: his old women are as good as Gerard Dow's,—all nature, oddity, and originality. Mause is seated in the sunshine at the door of her little lonely cottage, spinning on a roke, or distaff; her thoughts seem not with the work in hand; they have, it is likely, travelled to Peggy, "her ain sweet lady—her young bonnie bairn." All is composed around her; the cat sits winking and contented; the chickens feed under the shelter of their mother's wing; and all is in repose save Bauldy, who, believing Mause to be a witch, comes for a cast of

her skill, yet seems afraid of venturing into the presence of one capable of working such mischievous pranks, and who

“ Gets the wyte of a’ falls out.”

The fifth piece brings Patie and Peggy together ; but the artist has failed in delineating with elegance “ two true lovers in a dale : ” the heroine wants beauty, and the Gentle Shepherd wants passion : there is nothing to be commended in the design, save the figure of old Madge shouting in the distance to bring the young shepherdess home. — Sir William Worthy appears in the sixth sketch disguised as a wandering seer ; in foretelling the fortune of the Gentle Shepherd, his mystical language excites the wonder of Peggy and Jenny, and wild astonishment in Madge, who, aware of his meaning, seems to cry,

“ Awa ! awa ! the de’il’s owre grit wi’ you.”

It has not escaped the notice of those who like this design, that the artist has indicated the birth of the Gentle Shepherd by hanging the ballad of Gill Morice on the wall, and the antiquity of his lineage by the song of Chevy Chase.—In the seventh print, where Roger has an interview with Jenny, both figures are good, and the expression in keeping with the poet. The shepherd appears humble and supplicatory, and the shepherdess wears a look of quiet humour, which suits the words ; —

“ And what would Roger say, if he could speak ? ”

Perhaps Jenny has a touch too much of the virago; the inanimate nature of the landscape is worthy of the rest.—Madge, Mause, and Bauldy are brought before us in the eighth print; and here Allan needs not shrink from a comparison with almost any other painter of the humorous. The reader must remember the scene in which Bauldy comes rejoicing to tell Mause that Patie has become a “braw rich laird,” and as such will scorn the humble Peggy, who must fall to his own share without either witchcraft or conjuration; with the quarrel which ensues between him and Madge. Bauldy is yelling in pain and terror under the roke of the incensed spinster, who is exclaiming, —

“Auld roudes! filthy fallow, I shall auld ye.”

His dog takes his part, and pulls her back by the petticoat, while Mause gravely stays, or rather pretends to stay her. The effect of the group is much heightened by Glaud and Symon enjoying the sight over “the stackyard dike.”

There is considerable softness in the ninth print, where Patie assures Peggy of the continuance of his love. The merit, whatever it amounts to, belongs, however, to the lady: the lover is a lout.—The tenth design we consider as one of the most successful. It embodies these graphic lines: —

“While Peggy laces up her bosom fair,
With a blue snood Jenny binds up her hair;
Glaud, by his morning ingle, takes a beek,
The rising sun shines motty through the reek;
A pipe his mouth, the lasses please his een,
And now and then his joke maun intervene.”

Though day has only begun, an old female domestic is making porridge: a shepherd, who must be early to the hill, has filled his bicker, which, half asleep as he is, he is emptying again, in all the haste that food as hot as liquid fire will allow. His dog begs in vain for a mouthful. The cock and hens are about to make their exit to the croft or the stackyard. Glaucl sits with a face full of glee, looking at Peggy and Jenny bedizening themselves. We would have liked Peggy better, had she been lacing her bodice instead of putting a rose in her bosom. The remaining scenes require no particular description.

Of these designs, and the way in which he prepared the plates for the work, Allan thus speaks:—"I have engraved them in the manner called aquatinta,—a late invention, which has been brought to much perfection by Mr. Paul Sandby. A painter finds his advantage in this method, in which the pencil may be associated with the graver. It will be easily seen that I am not a master in the mechanical part of this art; but my chief intention was not to offer smooth and expensive engravings, but expressive and characteristic designs. How far I have succeeded it does not become me to say." The artist was not mistaken: the engraving is rude and rough, and quite unlike the smooth and brilliant work produced now. It is, nevertheless, full of nature, which is a compensation for many defects. The poem, united with its illustrations, was beautifully printed in quarto by the Foulises. It was one of the first works of that kind which Scot-

land had produced, and made the name of Allan popular all over the north.

He was now in his forty-fifth year. His Academy had a fair proportion of students, and yielded him as much as enabled him to maintain a house, and establish something like a studio. A little money arose, too, from such friends as reckoned him skilful in portraits ; and as the success of his illustrations for Ramsay opened a new field of adventure, he was emboldened to think of matrimony, and accordingly, in the month of October, 1788, took unto wife Shirley Welsh, the daughter of a carver and gilder in Edinburgh. The lady was much his junior ; but she loved the art in which her husband laboured, admired his productions too, and, though his person was otherwise than alluring, she proved a dutiful wife during her short trial of eight years.

Allan's duties in the Academy hindered him not from turning his thoughts to other works ; his mind teemed with subjects, domestic and historical. Among the latter we may mention the "Escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven Castle," and add to them his sketches in pencil, or in ink, of some of the most beautiful scenes in Scotland, such as Castle Campbell, Stirling from Alloa, Tulliallen Castle, the High Street of Edinburgh, and many others, for which we are afraid he had neither skill nor colours. His homely subjects deserve more attention. The principal were, "The Highland Dance," "The Scotch Wedding," and "The Repentance Stool," — the idea of which last, it is said, he took from a satiric poem on that subject, by Pennycuik, called "Rome's Legacy to the Kirk

of Scotland," though it is more likely to have been suggested by what he must often have seen with his own eyes, and which has been rendered familiar to English readers by the verse of Burns. Of these, the "Wedding" is the best: it is full of sedate joy, quiet humour, and boisterous glee, nor is it wanting in that sort of wit which belongs more to the hand than to the head. It was engraved in large, and exhibited over Scotland. The likeness was universally acknowledged; and few who saw it could resist open laughter. Such subjects, whether in actual flesh and blood, or seen through the medium of the pen or the pencil, have long been dear to the peasantry of the north. In the "Christ's Kirk on the Green," from the hand of King James, we have a bridal scene which, for life, humour, merriment, and mischief, no poet has surpassed; nor is the continuation by Ramsay much inferior, though we recognise a coarser feeling. But, what is more akin to our subject, there is a very curious and amusing picture of a "Scotch Wedding," extant still in Drummond Castle, painted not later than 1650. The drawing of the figures is far from correct; but it is, perhaps, the earliest work of the kind existing. The name of the artist is Gordon; probably James Gordon of Rothiemay, who made several views of Edinburgh, with one of Aberdeen, and had them engraved in Holland.

The "Penny Wedding," of which Allan gives us such a lively image, was in his time common in Scotland, and was one of the many ways which the peasantry had of awakening mirth and giving "a day's discharge to care." As soon as a couple

of rustics were proclaimed in the kirk, some nimble-footed friend was employed to summon the country round to the bridal. A large barn was cleared of its grain; split sticks were stuck in the walls to hold candles; a table was placed at the upper end for the graver guests, and all that remained of space was surrendered freely to those who paid a shilling, and desired to dance or be social. The bride was queen of the night till the hour of stocking-throwing came. People of condition mingled with the peasantry; the high-born damsel "set, and reeled, and crossed, and cleeket," with the ploughman — while a shepherd girl went down her two dozen couple of a country dance with the lord or a laird, just as it happened. The money raised went to discharge the cost of music and refreshments; and, according as the young pair were liked, they found a larger or smaller surplus to enable them to begin house-keeping.

Burns had commenced his short and bright career, when the rustic pictures of Allan began to take the public attention: he was among the foremost to perceive in the painter much of the truth and nature of which he was himself a worshipper; and although aware of a deficiency in elegance and beauty, regarded, probably, the presence of fun and humour as a sufficient compensation. During the period in which the poet wrote his incomparable lyrics, it occurred to Thomson, the proprietor of the work for which they were designed, that he might bring in the hand of our painter to illustrate the choicest scenes in Scottish song; some dozen or so were

accordingly produced; and several of these embody the images, serious or comic, of Burns. One of the best is "John Anderson my Jo:" the group is truly comic: John is a personification of sly glee and domestic gladness — his eyes seem glimmering with a delight for which he cannot find utterance; his wife, however, is a sad fright, — her aspect would become a scarecrow, yet it pleases her husband, and that is enough.* Another humorous subject was still more happily treated. "Allan," says Thomson, "has just sketched a charming design from Maggie Lauder. She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee." These, and others of the artist's designs, were submitted to Burns, who wrote the following letter to Thomson on the subject of the "stock and horn," a rude instrument of music which Allan was fond of putting into the hands of his shepherds: — "Tell my friend Allan, that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have, at last, gotten one, but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts: the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton-ham; the horn, which is a common highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn, until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh-bone; and, lastly, an oaten reed, ex-

* This "John Anderson my Jo" has been forgotten in that of Burnet, who has all the humour and more than the propriety of Allan.

actly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd-boy have when the corn-stems are green and full grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock, with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds wont to use in that country. If Mr. Allan chooses, I will send him a sight of mine, as I look on myself to be a kind of brother brush with him. 'Pride in poets is nae sin;' and I will say it, that I look on Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world."

As the work of illustration went on, the poet found other opportunities of commending the designs of the painter. "Woo'd and married an' a',"—he says, in one of his letters,—“is admirable; the grouping is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story of the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire Turnimspike.” One of the best, perhaps, is *The Gaberlunzie Man*. The gladsome looks of the 'paukie auld carle,' the joyous surprise of the young woman in recognising youth and strength where she had expected nothing better than weariness and woe, and the grave solicitude of the matron in matters of household economy, unite to form a picture of true natural humour and humble life. The songs of Scotland—those

of the olden minstrels and of Burns,—would have presented a fine field for a painter equal to the task of catching truly and embodying naturally their perpetually blending moods of humour and pathos ; but Allan, with all his talents, was deficient in that “art unteachable” of communicating grace and loveliness to the creations of the mind ; his touch was too gross to give the more delicate hues of feeling and of fancy, and, though he delineated the coarser features of the offspring of the Muse with considerable skill, it must be acknowledged that the task of painting in the varied spirit of the lyric poetry of the north is yet to be performed.

The fame which Allan acquired by these works soothed him during the slow sapping progress of a dropsical complaint, accompanied by an asthma, which arose from anxious application in a line of study requiring head and hand. His bodily strength was never great, nor had he any liking to the exercises of walking or riding, by which health is preserved and vigour confirmed. After an illness, of which he scarcely knew himself the commencement, he died August 6. 1796, in the fifty-third year of his age, leaving one daughter, named Barbara Anne, and a son, David, who went out a cadet to India in the year 1806.

In person this painter was under the middle size, of a slender make, with a long coarse face pitted by the small-pox, and hair of the colour of sand. His eyes were large and prominent, without animation or fire ; his nose was long and high ; his mouth wide ; and his whole exterior

mean and unpromising. On a stranger who met Allan in the street, such is the impression his looks would have left ; but in company to his liking he was another sort of person ; his large eyes grew bright and penetrating ; his manners pleasing, and his conversation open, gay, and humorous, inclining to satire, and replete with observation and anecdote. On the antiquities and literary history of his country he had employed much of his leisure time, and delighted to discourse ; he boldly pronounced the stock and horn, of which Burns gave him an account, to be an instrument too rude for producing true music, and fit only for "routing and roaring."

As a painter, his merits are of a limited nature ; he neither excelled in fine drawing nor in harmonious colouring, and grace and grandeur were beyond his reach. He painted portraits — which are chiefly remarkable for a strong homely resemblance : he painted landscapes, but these want light and air ; and he attempted the historical, but save in one picture, "The Corinthian Maid," all his efforts in that way were failures. His genius lay in expression, especially in grave humour and open drollery. Yet it would be difficult, perhaps, to name one of his pictures where nature is not overcharged ; he could not stop his hand till he had driven his subject into the debatable land that lies between truth and caricature. He is among painters, what Allan Ramsay is among poets, — a fellow of infinite humour, and excelling in all manner of rustic drollery, but deficient in fine sensibility of conception, and little acquainted with lofty emotion or high imagination.

NORTHCOTE.

His whose life I am about to write was one of those men who rise to eminence in the world more from skill in various departments, than from original excellence in any one. The man who, without much presumption, wrote himself painter, critic, fabulist, and biographer, merits a memoir such as may exhibit his character, and illustrate his pretensions.

James Northcote was born at Plymouth, in Devonshire, on the 22d day of October, 1746. At times he claimed descent from certain Northcotes who flourished nearly as far back as the Norman Conquest; numbered sundry high-sheriffs of the county amongst his ancestors, and reckoned kin with Sir Clifford Northcote of Pynes: but in his cynical moods he contented himself with humbler ancestry. "All people," he could then say, "are sprung from somebody; and even the Northcotes have an origin: in Devonshire there stood four cottages; one was called Eastcot, one Westcot, one Southcot, and one Northcot: I am of the latter house; and so there's an honest descent, without help from the Heralds' Office." But the vanity of remote ancestry finally triumphed. He left £1500, by will, to some one who exhibited, from parchments and tradition, a line of descent which reached to the days of William

the Conqueror. It was his pleasure frequently to talk of the old families, and importance of his native county. "You are to consider," he said, "that it is almost a peninsula, so that there is no thoroughfare, and people are, therefore, more stationary on one spot; for this reason they intermarry among themselves, and you can trace the genealogies of families for centuries back. There are squires and gentry in that part of the world who have occupied the same estates long before the Conquest, and who look down upon the Court-enays and others as upstarts." *

Whatever the remote ancestors of Northcote were, his father was a humble citizen of his native place; a little active man, a watchmaker, who lived in Market Street, and was well known to the inhabitants of Plymouth Dock, now Devonport, as he made it his business to wind up and regulate their clocks. "His house," says a person who knew him, "had two windows; in one he exhibited watches under repair, and in the other his wife exposed thread, tape, sleeve but-

* Northcote loved strong expressions: the squires and gentry of Devonshire must have lived in darkness when the Courtenays were unknown, for Gibbon says he discerns their "nobility and opulence with the first rays of light." The Courtenays sat on the throne of Constantinople, and mingled their blood with the royal families of England and France. The great antiquity, however, of some of the country gentlemen's families in Devonshire cannot be disputed. There is a rhyme, for example, in every mouth there, which says, —

"When the Conqueror did come,
Croker and Copplestone were at home."

tons, and such small matters for sale: he was a quiet and not ill-informed man; and as at that time coffee-houses were rarities, some of the better sort of inhabitants would resort to his shop, and chat for an hour or two on the ordinary topics of the day." He was a man, too, of observation and sagacity. "My father used to say," observed the painter, "that there were people of premature ability, who soon ran to seed, and others who made no figure till they advanced in life. He had known several who were very clever at seventeen or eighteen, but who turned out nothing afterwards; at that time of life the effervescence and intoxication of youth did a great deal, but we required to wait till the gaiety and dance of the animal spirits subsided to see what people really were."

James was the second son; his elder brother, Samuel, made excellent watches, and improved the thermometer, but died early. There was a good grammar-school in those days in Plymouth Dock, under the direction of a clergyman appointed by the corporation: enquiries have been made, but it does not appear that Northcote was a scholar there; and none of his contemporaries recollect his having been their companion in any school. It is supposed that he obtained the little instruction which he ever received from the minister of a dissenting meeting-house, an Unitarian, it is believed, of whose flock his father and mother were members. He has not said much about his parentage or his education, though he loved to talk about himself. "I never," he observed to Hazlitt, "could learn my lesson

at school. My copy was hardly legible; but if there was a prize to be obtained, or my father was to see it, then I could write a very fine hand, with all the usual flourishes. What I know of history and heraldry has been gathered up when I had to enquire into the subject for a picture; if it had been set to me as a task, I should have forgotten it immediately." His scholarship was small: he not only knew no language but his own, but he even knew that imperfectly; and false spelling, in spite of extensive reading, adhered to him till the last. "Jack the Giant Killer is the first book," said he, "I ever read, and I cannot describe the pleasure it gives me even now. I cannot look into it without my eyes filling with tears. It is to me, from early impressions, the most heroic of performances. I remember once not having money to buy it, and I transcribed it all out with my own hand. Had I been bred a scholar, Homer, I dare say, would have been my Jack the Giant-Killer." Money could not have been plentiful with Northcote in his boyish days, for the price of "The right valiant Cornish Man" was only a penny.

On looking over his conversations, as recorded by Hazlitt, I see little that refers to his early studies in art: he was not one who delighted in relating how he laboured while a boy, or from whom he obtained his pencils, or to whom he was indebted for advice given in secret, or pictures lent to copy or imitate. I have heard that his progress was slow, and that all he produced was laboriously done: he had no first out-flashings; he grew quietly up into eminence year by

year. His desire to be distinguished as an artist arose from the fame of Reynolds, whose friendship with the family of the Mudges made him much talked of in Devonport; and his first attempts are said to have been portraits and outlines, which some blamed and more commended. He was sixteen years old and irrecoverably an artist, when Sir Joshua Reynolds visited Devonport, accompanied by Dr. Johnson. "I remember," said Northcote, "when he was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled, I got as near to him as I could from the pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind." This is sufficiently enthusiastic, and shows the resolute liking which already possessed him for painting. In the turn which he showed for art, his father saw for a time little but cause for sorrow and vexation: the old man was poor—so poor, that it was said by the members of a little club to which he belonged, that in his supper with them he took his dinner. Besides, he was a dissenter, and dissenters were in those days rigid and zealous; and it is not unlikely that the young artist found his darling pursuit regarded as a thing vain and frivolous by both father and mother. Even in the spirit of his own maxim, his father might dread that all this proceeded from the premature ability, or mental intoxication, which sometimes appears in youth; we must not, therefore, blame him for doubting whether the light by which his son walked was light from heaven, but rather commend him for his anxiety, and for his apprenticing

the youth to his own business, in order that he might be enabled to earn his bread and be secured against want.

Whatever were the motives, Northcote was subjected to the unwelcome task of cleaning and repairing watches. No one ever heard him speak of his skill in that business, but it was such as satisfied his father; and when the point was gained, he was permitted, during his evening and morning hours of leisure, to follow his favourite pursuit. He accordingly made drawings and portraits with such success, that his father relaxed in his rigidness; and when the neighbours began to enquire and applaud, he condescended to look on the sketches of "fat Jack," as he nicknamed his son, who was little and lean, and contrasted strangely with a tall and corpulent acquaintance whom the people of Devonport knew by that facetious phrase.

Though Northcote had studied much and drawn much, it is not clear that he made an early choice of art for his profession. Like another genius of a higher order, he might wish to make it a staff, and not a crutch; but, as he grew in years and knowledge, the Muse who presides over painting prevailed against any inclination he might have had for succeeding his father in regulating the clocks of Devonport. Before the age of twenty-one had released him from his indenture, he had unconsciously fixed his election for life; and though he still continued to follow his business, he forsook it more and more till he found himself strong enough in art to relinquish it entirely. The little that he had earned by his

trade was more than replaced by his pencil ; and as he was admonished by the poverty of his father to contract habits of care and economy, he required little to keep soul and body together, or to enable him to establish a small studio, and stock it with colours, pencils, canvasses, and drawings. His first painting-room has been described as very small and mean ; and its squalid appearance contrasted strangely, in the eyes of every visiter, with the buoyant spirits of its possessor. He continued in Devonport till he was four-and-twenty years old : his acquirements may be briefly described as consisting of a rude knack at drawing character, without much feeling of true proportion, and a slight knowledge of colours, which he was inclined to lay on the canvass agreeably to a perverse notion of his own rather than according to the light and shade of nature.

With the year 1771 the fortune of Northcote began to dawn. The friendship of Dr. John Mudge procured for him the notice of Reynolds ; and though it would appear that Sir Joshua shook his head and shrugged his shoulders when he looked on his imperfect drawings and rude portraits, he was prevailed upon to admit him into his house as a student, and give him all the advantages of his gallery. " If I might now," observes Northcote, " he suffered to say a little of myself, I would declare that I feel it next to impossible to express the pleasure I received in breathing, if it may be so said, in an atmosphere of art ; having been until this period entirely debarred not only from the practice of the art

itself, but even from the sight of pictures of any excellence, as the county of Devon did not at that time abound with specimens, and even those few which are scattered about that county I had no opportunity of ever seeing ; and as, from the earliest period of my being able to make any observation, I had conceived Reynolds to be the greatest painter that had ever lived, it may be conjectured what I felt when I found myself in his house as his scholar." It was not likely that Reynolds would take the admiration of his scholar amiss, more especially as he showed not only a proper enthusiasm for art, but such a spirit of study and labour as Sir Joshua had never before witnessed. He rose speedily into favour ; he drew late and early ; he made experiments in light and shade, and his attempts began to draw the remarks of visitors ; nor were his shrewd and witty sayings unnoticed. It was soon rumoured in the circles of art, that Reynolds had imported a Devonshire prodigy, who was likely to rival him in truth of character and beauty of colouring.

The studio of Reynolds afforded other facilities of which Northcote had need, and of which he was sensible. " Among the many advantages," said he, " which were to be gained in the house of Sir Joshua, one of the most considerable certainly was the opportunity of improvement from the familiar intercourse which he perpetually kept up with the most eminent men of his time for genius and learning." Northcote relates, that during the five years which he spent under the roof of Reynolds, he was

treated quite as one of the family, and sat at the dinner-table which was lighted up by the wit of Burke and the wisdom of Johnson. This statement has been modified by the explanation of Miss Gwatkin, one of the nieces of Reynolds, who says that her uncle's pupils dined by themselves when he had company at his table : when there were no visitors, they dined with the family, took one glass of wine, put back their chairs, and retired. She felt surprised, she observed, at what Northcote had said in his Memoirs of Sir Joshua, about conversations which occurred when he could not have been present ; and she imagined that he got them from her aunt, Miss Reynolds, who was partial to her townsman, and liked to hear him talk.

He not only studied under the roof of Reynolds, but attended the Royal Academy, where he drew from sculpture, and afterwards from the living model. He was quick in perceiving the defects of his fellow-students, and slow in remedying his own. " The glaring defects of such works," said he, " have almost disgusted me with the profession. Is this, I said, what the art is made up of ? How do I know that my own productions may not appear in the same light to others ? Nothing gave me the horrors so much as passing the old battered portraits at the doors of brokers' shops, with the morning sun shining full upon them. I was generally inclined to prolong my walk, and put off painting for that day ; but the sight of a fine picture had a contrary effect, and I went back and set to work with redoubled ardour." That his early productions

appeared crude and ill-digested to others, I have been assured by some who studied along with him. The want of decision and truth in his outline was an early fault which, with all his skill, he could never mend; though, like his master, Sir Joshua, he strove, when his palette was prepared, to conceal it in colour. The sharp admonitions which he received gave him a dislike to the Academy, and in after-life he thus entered his testimony against it:—"When the Royal Academy first began, one would have supposed that the members were so many angels sent from heaven to fill the different situations: now the difficulty is to find any body fit for them; and deficiency is supplied by interest, intrigue, and cabal. Not that I object to the individuals neither. As Swift said, I like Jack, Tom, and Harry very well by themselves, but altogether they are not to be endured."

Of his studies under the eye of Sir Joshua, he relates that, for the sake of practice, he painted the portrait of one of the female servants. The likeness was so strong, that it was recognised by a large macaw, which Reynolds introduced in several of his pictures. The bird had no good will to the maid-servant; and the moment he saw her portrait, he spread out his wings, and ran in fury, and bit at the face. Perceiving that he made no impression, he struck at the hand, and then looked behind, and, lowering his wings, walked off. "Sir Joshua observed," said Northcote, "that it was as extraordinary an instance as the old story of the bunch of grapes."

As Northcote's knowledge increased, his con-

fidence increased also: he began to question the propriety of directions given to the students, regarding colours, by one of the visitors. Sir Joshua looked at him, and said, "He is a sensible man, and but an indifferent colourist. There is not a man on earth who has the least notion of colouring: we all of us have it equally to seek for, and find out—as, at present, it is totally lost to the art." Consolatory words to Northcote! His colouring had improved, and now and then he touched off a bit to the liking of his master; but these were lucky hits—the offspring of chance rather than of principle: he began in the dark, and had not yet got into full light. Having questioned the skill of a common member of the Academy, he ventured to give advice to the President. He had observed, that the colours which parted brilliantly from his master's brush soon lost their glow on the canvass. "I once humbly endeavoured," said he, "to persuade Sir Joshua to abandon those fleeting colours, lake and carmine, which it was his practice to use in painting the flesh, and to adopt vermilion in their stead, as infinitely more durable; although, perhaps, not so exactly true to nature as the former. I remember he looked on his hand, and said 'I can see no vermilion in flesh.' I replied, 'But did not Sir Godfrey Kneller always use vermilion in his flesh colour?' Sir Joshua answered, rather sharply, 'What signifies what a man used who could not colour?—You may use it if you will.'"

Except what Northcote gained from such testy conversations, or gathered from the practice of Sir Joshua, he was not likely to make much

progress in natural colouring, under one who considered his knowledge as a part of his fortune, and concealed it as a spell, which to reveal would undo him. "He would not suffer me," says his pupil, "during the whole time I resided in his house, to make use of any other materials than the common preparations of colour, just as we have them from the hands of the colour-man; and all varnishes, and every kind of experiment, were strictly prohibited. Likewise all his own preparations of colour were most carefully concealed from my sight and knowledge, and perpetually locked secure in his drawers; thus never to be seen or known by any one but himself." Sir Joshua might have safely allowed Northcote to make his own experiments in colours; for he had not the patience necessary for prolonged investigation. He was noted, early in life, for a too great readiness of reply to all who noticed defects in his works. He had a reason at hand for all he did; and the most patient soon grew weary of instructing one so very wise and ingenious. The term, too, of five years, which Northcote had in his own mind allowed for study under Sir Joshua, was fast expiring: and he began to look forward to the time when he might make use of any colours he pleased, and have recourse to all manner of experiments. "The latter end of the year 1775 was now arrived," he observes, "when it only wanted a few months of five years that I had been with him, and when I also approached the twenty-ninth year of my age, and I thought it high time for me to do something for myself at so late a period in the life of a pupil,

having been prevented, by many causes, from beginning my studies as a painter in early youth." He intimated his wish to his master, when " Sir Joshua, with a gentleness in his manner, said, he thought I was now well able to do for myself. I replied, that I was very sensible of the obligations I owed him, and that I would stay any time longer he should think proper, if I could be of any service to him. Sir Joshua said, by no means, as I had already done him much service. I answered, that I feared I had not been of so much service to him as I wished ; but that it was solely from my want of power, and not inclination. Sir Joshua was so very obliging as to say, that I had been very useful to him, more so than any scholar that had ever been with him ; and added, ' I hope we shall assist each other as long as we live.' "

Of his employment in the gallery of Reynolds, it is less necessary to give any detailed account, since he was only allowed to touch subordinate parts, prepare grounds, or make copies for his own benefit in practice and pocket. He disliked the drudgery of copying ; and observed, with a sneer, " Copying pictures is like plain work among women : it is what any body can do, and therefore nothing but a bare living is to be got by it." He confessed, that, in common with many students, he was startled when he first began to copy from the living figure in the Academy : his companions were not slow in asserting, that he always eyed the female model with something like alarm in his countenance, and that his hand traced, in consequence, a very unequal and undecided line. From studies such

as these he retired into Devonshire, where he remained nearly a year, painting portraits for ten or fifteen guineas each, with the purpose of raising a purse weighty enough to carry him into Italy. In this he was aided, it is surmised, by his elder brother, who had already acquired some notice, and was considered the truest genius of the family. With a little money in his pocket, with no knowledge of any language save his mother-tongue, with some letters of introduction to Roman artists in his hand, and with unbounded confidence in his own fortunes, he set out for Italy in the year 1777.

In after-life, when instructing a student, who was on the wing for Rome, what masters to study, and what galleries to visit, he added, "But remember, young man, your chief object is to *steal*." With something of the same purpose, Northcote crossed the Alps. He had seen the memorandum books of Reynolds, in which the most natural and noble attitudes of figures and heads from other masters were noted down to be employed in future works of his own; and it could not have escaped one so observing, that his master had wrought many of them into portraits, male and female. It has been said of Pope, that in all his brethren there is not one happy turn which he has not imitated; and it may be said of Sir Joshua, that he transferred to his own canvass all the lucky hits and studied excellencies of light and shade which he saw amongst the great masters of Italy. But to steal is one thing, and to steal wisely another. To borrow deep colouring from Titian, or divine thought

from Raphael, required skill little short of their own. The rogueries of art require to be dexterously done: a celestial hand alone can purloin from the gods. He always spoke with pleasure of his journey. "There may be sin," said he, "in Rome, as in all great capitals; but in Parma, and the remoter towns, they seem all one family. Their kindness to strangers is great. I travelled from Lyons to Genoa, and from Genoa to Rome, without speaking a word of the language, and in the power of a single person, without meeting with the smallest indignity: every where, both in inns and on the road, every attention was paid to my feelings, and pains taken to make me comfortable."

When he reached Rome, he went to the Sistine chapel, and paid homage, as his master had done, to the presiding spirit of the place. As he looked there and elsewhere, he felt that his dreams of portrait-painting were unsubstantial and unreal, compared to the glories which arose from historical compositions. The more he studied, the more he was convinced that little was lasting which had not its source in science and poetry; and he surrendered his feelings freely to this new impulse. With all his enthusiasm, he perceived, what few artists have done; namely, that neither repetitions of the antique would do in sculpture, nor imitations of Raphael in painting. "It is easy," said he, "to imitate one of the old masters. If you want to last, you must invent something. To do otherwise, is only pouring liquor from one vessel into another, that becomes staler every time. We are tired of the antique: the world wants something

new, and will have it ; no matter whether it be better or worse, if there is but an infusion of new life and spirit, it will go down to posterity. There is Michael Angelo : how utterly different from the antique, and in some things how superior ! there is his statue of Cosmo de' Medici leaning on his hand, in the Chapel of St. Lorenzo at Florence : I declare it has that look of reality in it that it almost terrifies one to be near it. Is it not the same with Titian, Correggio, and Raphael ? These painters did not imitate one another, but were as unlike as possible, and yet were all excellent. Originality is neither caprice nor affectation. It is an excellence that is always to be found in nature, but has never had a place in art before." These sentiments do honour to Northcote, and are as plainly spoken as they are just and natural. In truth, we have made much less progress in art than we imagine. We have not yet approached the grandeur and godlike dignity of the great foreign masters ; we want poetic elevation ; we are behind in that majestic simplicity and loftiness of invention which belong to the princes of the art. Nor do we make their direct and immediate appeals to the heart. There was a visible meaning in all they did. They painted no riddles ; they made no bodies for the sake of making bodies, for they put souls into their figures : in short, they were utterly unacquainted with the art, in which too many excel, of making picturesque groups. They made no shows of legs and muscles, though they had them in perfection. Sentiment prevailed over all.

He has said little, in his letters or conversa-

ations, about his way of life or of study at Rome. I have heard that, as necessity and nature united in making him economical, he lived meanly, associated with none who were likely to lead him into expenses; and as he copied for dealers or travellers a number of the favourite works of the Italian masters, he improved his skill of hand, and rather increased than diminished the sum with which he started from England. Common apartments, common clothes, and common food, sufficed for one who was too proud to ask aid from any source, and who had resolved to be independent. He formed the notion of uniting, on his return to England, portrait with historical painting; making the income arising from the first pay, and more than pay, for the time bestowed on the second. He accordingly studied both. For knowledge in likenesses, he had recourse to Titian, whom he joined Reynolds in declaring to be the supreme head of the school of portraiture. To gain an intimate acquaintance with the works of that master, he not only visited every collection in Rome, but wandered over Italy. There were heaps, so he expressed it, of Titian's pictures at Naples, who painted them for the Farnese family. "There is that fine one," said he to Hazlitt, "which you heard me speak of,—Paul the Third and his two natural sons, or nephews as they are called. My God! what a look it has. The old man is sitting in his chair, and looking up to one of the sons, with his hands grasping the arm-chair with his long spider fingers, and seems to say, as plain as words can speak, 'You wretch, what do you want now?' while the young fellow

is advancing with an humble hypocritical air." So well did he store his sketch-books, and stock his memory with notes and memorandums regarding this favourite painter, that he was enabled, near forty years afterwards, to draw from them materials for the "Life and Times of Titian."

His observations on the source of Italian inspiration in art are just and profound. It is but fair, however, to state, that, if they were made during his stay at Rome, they were neither uttered nor written till the year 1828, when other critics had given breath to similar sentiments. "As to lofty history," he observes, "our religion scarcely allows it. The Italians had no more genius for painting, nor a greater love of pictures, than we; but their church was the foster-mother of the fine arts. Being the most politic and powerful establishment in the world, they laid their hands on all that could allure and impress the minds of the people, — music, painting, architecture, ceremonies; and this produced a succession of great artists and noble works, till the churches were filled, and then they ceased. The genius of Italian art was nothing but the genius of popery; every thing at Rome is like a picture — is calculated for show. I remember walking through one of the by-streets near the Vatican, where I met some procession in which the Pope was; and all at once I saw a number of the most beautiful Arabian horses curvetting and throwing out their long tails like a vision, or part of a romance. All our pageants are Bartholomew Fair exhibitions compared with what you see at Rome. And then, to see the Pope give the benediction in St. Peter's,

raising himself up, and spreading out his hands in the form of a cross, with an energy and dignity as if he was giving a blessing to the whole world." Of Edwards the painter, he related, that, on going to see the Sistine chapel with Romney, he was so little moved by the beauty of the works around, that he turned on his heel, and exclaimed, "Egad, George, we're bit!"—"Northcote spoke," says Hazlitt, "of his journey to Italy, of the beauty of the climate, of the manners of the people, of the imposing effect of the Roman catholic religion, of its favourableness to the fine arts, of the churches full of pictures, of the manner in which he passed his time, studying and looking into all the rooms in the Vatican: he had no fault to find with Italy, and no wish to leave it. Gracious and sweet was all he saw in her. As he talked, he looked as if he saw the different objects pass before him, and his eye glistened with familiar recollections. He said Raphael did not scorn to look out of himself, or to be beholden to others: he took whole figures from Massaccio to enrich his designs, because all he wanted was, to advance the art, and ennoble human nature. After he saw Michael Angelo he improved in freedom and breadth: all his works are an effusion of the sweetness and dignity of his own character." Having painted a number of portraits, male and female, some of which he left behind, he returned to England through Florence, to whose gallery of heads he added his portrait: and through Flanders, for the sake of studying in the collections which had the best works of Rubens and Vandyke.

When, in the year 1780, he re-appeared in London, he was welcomed warmly by Reynolds, who asked him what he thought of Michael Angelo, and what were his own views in life. Northcote replied, "For once that I went to look at Raphael, I went twice to look at Michael; and, with respect to my own views, I am resolved to take a house and commence painting portrait and history." Sir Joshua praised his taste, and also his resolution; and advised him to take a house in Leicester Fields, and set up his easel beside his old master. But circumstances did not permit him to follow counsel of which he doubted the propriety: he contented himself with a more humble abode, and took lodgings at No. 2. Old Bond Street. Sir Joshua was still supreme head of the realms of portraiture; but a new competitor had come forward in historic composition. Fuseli, lately returned from his studies at Rome, had almost instantly attracted public notice by the undaunted boldness of his speculations. Had any one looked at Northcote and Fuseli through their works alone, the one too extravagant, and the other too tame, no resemblance would have been traced; but when in company, and face to face, there was a close similitude of personal character. It has been remarked, that little ill-blood was ever visible between them: they did not disgrace themselves by uncivil bickerings, though it is acknowledged that they looked on each other with distrust and dislike. In truth, if Northcote dreaded the crucifying ridicule of Fuseli, the Swiss respected what he called the annihilating sar-

casms, more venomous than a serpent's tooth, of the Englishman : they were at all times —

“Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike ;”

and eyed one another like two pitted cocks, that strut and peck and chuckle in scorn, before they leap into the air and stab with their steel heels.

Another rival, and of a more dangerous nature, made his appearance in the lists. This was Opie. The “Cornish Wonder” was opposed to the “Devonshire Prodigy.” Both were of humble origin ; with little of what the world calls education ; both came, too, from the great academy of nature ; for assuredly the influence of studios, or galleries of works of art, had no share in preparing them for the contest. Reynolds was privately in favour of Northcote ; Wolcot, the satiric rhymers, was publicly in favour of Opie : the former sought to do his pupil service by all those nameless and indescribable ways of intimating preference without expressing it ; while the latter, a bold, dauntless, and shameless person, wrote verses and paragraphs in favour of Opie, which were blown far and wide by the hot breath of the public press. Nature, however, took the matter into her own hands, and raised the one soonest to distinction whom she had inspired most. Opie soon found himself invested with what he called a “terrific popularity :” he felt that his right hand had not acquired sufficient skill, nor his mind that sense of the delicate and the beautiful, which would enable him to keep the place to which he had been borne as on wings, and without his own

consent. Northcote looked on all this in his own quiet, cool way, and foretold the descent of the popular idol from its pedestal. "In a very little space of time," said he, "that capricious public, who had so violently admired and employed Opie when he first appeared and was a novelty among them, and was in reality only the embryo of a painter, after he *had* proved himself to be a real artist, left him with disgust, because he was a novelty no longer." Though in a great measure pitted against each other, Northcote and Opie were, to all appearance, friends. "I wish you had known Opie," the former observed to Hazlitt: "he was a very original-minded man: I do not say that he was always right, but he put your thoughts into a new track, which was worth following."

After his return from Rome, Northcote visited his family in Devonport, and painted the portraits of all who were attracted by that increase of fame which study abroad brings. "I took," said Mr. Rosdew of Plymouth, "my friend, Mr. Bulteel of Fleet, to see his works, observing to him, as we went, that the painter was not above the influence of flattery. We went through his father's little shop, and up a small winding staircase. At the top were two doors leading to two rooms, in each of which were pictures. That on the right hand contained a large picture, a portrait of a very worthy but a very severe stern man; and so much of the character was in the face, that my companion, when he saw it, said, 'Cover that picture up, or I can't come in; he is going to say a stern thing to me.' Northcote bowed, and

seemed so grateful, that he looked as if he would have worshipped the speaker." He was at all times very accessible to flattery; and though he would not have allowed it to be laid on, as the poet says, with a trowel, he was not averse to a thick varnishing. Soon after his establishment in London, and when his pictures began to be talked of, a friend from Plymouth visited the artist, praised his works, and was going away. — "When shall we see you here again?" enquired the painter. — "When you are Sir James Northcote," replied the Devonian. — "Oh, that will never be," said the artist. — "Then there will be more want of discernment than of merit, sir," said his flatterer. Upon this one present exclaimed, "You would not swallow that, would you?" — "Swallow!" said the painter; "why not? I will swallow any thing that is sweet and pleasing." The bitter things which dropt like aquafortis from his tongue, in after-years, made his early weaknesses remembered.

I have heard men of taste claim for Northcote the merit of being the founder of the school of historical painting in England: they were of Devon; and might desire to honour their countryman, without being aware of wronging Reynolds, or of the claims of West and Barry. Northcote was only known as the exhibiter of an indifferent portrait or two, when those distinguished men had produced some of their highest historical pictures. In 1783 he sent to the Exhibition three pictures, part portrait, and part fanciful. One was, "Beggars with Dancing Dogs;" a second was "Hobinella," from Gay's

Shepherd's Week ; and a third was " The Village Doctress : " and in 1784 he exhibited the picture of " Captain Englefield with eleven of his crew saving themselves in the pinnace from the wreck of the Centaur, of 74 guns, lost September, 1782." But admitting these to be of the historical rank, we must not forget that " The Death of Wolfe," by West, and " The Adam and Eve," by Barry, had been painted ten years before. Northcote, nevertheless, ranks with the fathers of historical painting. His conception was usually just, his meaning plain ; nor was there an utter absence of poetic dignity in any of his works : he looked on nature with no vulgar eye, and desired to confine her luxuriance within the limits of science and sense. The Shipwreck of Captain Englefield was very favourably received : the twelve portraits in the picture were considered well drawn, and harmoniously combined in one clear and intelligible action. New sitters were attracted ; and the way to the painter's door began to be encumbered with carriages, and servants holding saddle-horses, much in the manner which he himself relates of Opie. He had reaped the crop of portraiture which his native country presented, and now established himself in Clifford Street, New Bond Street, where he commenced housekeeper, in a small way, and formed something resembling a studio and gallery.

Though money poured in and fame increased, the soul of the painter failed to expand with his fortune. He was, in truth, of a nature narrow and contracted. He maintained his early sharp system of economy, kept up the same simpli-

city of dress, and the same frugality of table. Neither did Northcote bate one jot of his sarcastic remarks and bitter sayings; not only did he fling the barbed and sometimes poisoned darts of his speech against men in high places, but he spared not the brethren of the palette, or, if he spared any, it was only Sir Joshua. He now began, too, to pen criticisms in the newspapers, and give accounts of pictures and picture-dealers: moreover, he was more than suspected of writing rhymes. Some of his portraits having been sharply handled by the critics, he conceived a dislike to all the race who live by disposing of their opinions: he accused them of ignorance,—of knowing nothing of Michael Angelo or the grand style,—and averred that there was something so spiritual, so mystical or profound, in works of art, that no one could comprehend them save those who had studied in the schools and travelled to Rome. To Reynolds, who sometimes visited him, these sentiments were not unwelcome; but the image of frugality which his household presented was more pleasing to the President than the sight of the paintings: he shrugged his shoulders, hinted, and murmured, and finally accused him of worshipping the florid style of colouring, and with deficiency in the harmony of light and shade.

He sent to the exhibition of the year 1785 eight pictures, of which five were portraits, and three works of fancy: the portraits are without names; the others are, "The Charity," "The Fruit Girl," and "The Visit to the Grandmother." These were so well received that Northcote made


a step into history, and, in the year 1786, painted his "King Edward V. and his Brother, Richard Duke of York, murdered in the Tower, by order of Richard III.;" "The Death of Prince Leopold of Brunswick;" and "The Loss of the Halsewell East Indiaman." The first of these was praised by the critics, and beautifully copied by the graver; and the fame of Northcote was spread over the land. He was already favourably known by the Shipwreck of Captain Englefield and The Village Doctress, both of which had been engraved: but this was a work of a higher quality; the characters were dead and gone, and he had to imagine faces, and endow them with sentiment, in the spirit of history. That he has accomplished this has never been questioned, though I have heard both the proportions of the figures and the style of colouring spoken of as much inferior to the sentiment and feeling of the scene. There is, in truth, hardly a picture of his in which the proportions are harmonious, or the drawing correct: in this fine painting, however, the exquisite innocence and grace of the children triumph over all defects. The Royal Academy now admitted him to the honours of Associate; nor among the lists of his works is there any proof that he smoothed the way to preferment by painting portraits of the already honoured brethren. He was, indeed, no flatterer, nor swimmer with the stream; to praise him was not always the surest way of pleasing him; and no one ever succeeded who tried contradiction.

This has been called the golden age of historical painting in England: the King employed West,

and Boydell retained all other members of the Academy who had any reputation in poetic composition. The aim of that generous patron of the fine arts was to establish a market all over the world for engravings, from the best paintings of the English masters, and so diffuse at one and the same time a knowledge of our history, our poetry, and our fine arts, among all nations. The scheme was a magnificent one, and it prospered for a time. To the Shakspeare Gallery Northcote contributed his "Murder of the Royal Children," and was then desired by Boydell, with a Londoner's feeling, to try his hand on the "Death of Wat Tyler." The painter thus relates the history of this noble picture:—"I said that I could make nothing of it; but as soon as Boydell was gone, and I was left to myself, the whole then seemed to unfold itself naturally. I never could study the rules of composition, or make sketches and drawings beforehand: in this, probably running into the opposite error to that of the modern Italian painters, whom Fuseli reproaches with spending their whole lives in preparation,—I must begin at once, or I can do nothing. When I set about the 'Wat Tyler' I was frightened at it; it was the largest work I had ever undertaken: there were to be horses, and armour, and buildings, and several groups in it: when I looked at it, the canvass seemed ready to fall on me. But I had committed myself, and could not escape; disgrace was behind me, and every step I made in advance was so much positively gained. If I had staid to make a number of designs, and try

different experiments, I never should have had the courage to go on." These are the confessions of a man who seems to have had little imaginative power: who saw his subject by a leg and a head at a time, and wanted that pictorial splendour of fancy which places the scene which he longs to embody before his mind's eye as clearly as a portrait taker places a sitter. Northcote had to grope his way more than a poetic artist ought; and though he seized, sometimes, noble things in the dark, what he produced was more the result of incessant labour than of a happy exertion of fancy and feeling. This was the cause of a certain air of stiffness, and want of natural ease, which marked many of his figures: they were not made at once, and seemed to usurp the canvass by force, rather than hold it as their inheritance.

The "Wat Tyler," the largest, if not the happiest effort of the painter, met with a very gracious reception from the world. The story of the heroic mayor and the bold insurgent is told with great simplicity and truth. Tyler, stunned by a stroke of Walworth's mace, is dropping from his horse; the poniard of a citizen is ready to make all secure; the youthful king gazes on the scene with a touch of boyish astonishment, while the rebels bend their bows and advance their spears to avenge the death of their leader. The colouring is rich, the light and shade happy: the work fills the imagination, and realises history. The citizens, one and all, applauded the performance: the terrors which hemmed the artist around whilst he painted



were dispelled by the voice of general approbation. "Now, Northcote will go home," said Fuseli, "put an extra piece of coal on his fire, and be almost tempted to draw the cork of his only pint of wine, when he hears such praise." In the "Death of Wat Tyler," as well as in compositions later and earlier, Northcote imagined himself imitating Titian and other Italian masters; but, in truth, he imitated, perhaps unconsciously, his master, Reynolds. He could only see what was really before him. The Titians which he saw at Venice, and Naples, and Rome, did not accompany him out of Italy: all, save the general impression they made, faded from his recollection; whereas Sir Joshua's labours were visible every day. Such pleasant delusions are not uncommon in the world. Rowe imagined that he imitated Shakspeare.

It was the fortune of Northcote to live long in something like a state of opposition to Opie. They were both engaged in historical pictures, by the same adventurous alderman, and acquitted themselves in a way which, with many, left their merits in the balance. Opie had more force and more life; but then he wanted a certain air of academic elegance, which Northcote bestowed on all his compositions; the first was sometimes vulgar, and a want of elevation and purity was discernible in all he did; the latter had little natural fire, but he had a fine sense of what history required. The dignity of Raphael had not been exhibited to him in vain. In after-life, when Opie had ceased to be in any one's way, Northcote could recall, without any bitterness,

their days of rivalry. "Opie," said he to Hazlitt, "was a man of sense and observation: he paid me the compliment of saying, that we would have been the best of friends in the world if we had not been rivals. I think he had more of this feeling than I had; perhaps, because I had most vanity. We sometimes got into foolish altercations. I recollect once, in particular, at a banker's in the city, we took up the whole of dinner-time with a ridiculous controversy about Milton and Shakspeare. I am sure neither of us had the least notion which was right; and when I was heartily ashamed of it, a foolish citizen added to my confusion by saying, 'Lord! what I would give to hear two such men as you talk every day!'" On another occasion, when on his way to Devonport, Opie parted with him where the road branches off for Cornwall. He said to those who were on the coach with him, "That is Opie the painter."—"Is it, indeed!" they all cried, and upbraided Northcote for not informing them sooner. Upon this he contrived, by way of experiment, to try the influence of his own name; but his fame had not reached those enlightened "Outsiders," and the painter confessed he felt mortified.

The fame which he acquired by the Wat Tyler was supported by his pictures of the "Burial of the murdered Princes in the Tower," and the "Arthur and Hubert." The former of these compositions is much more picturesque than natural: the murderers, accompanied by torch-bearers, are represented carrying the naked children down a steep and difficult stair; and instead of conveying them the easiest and readiest

way, they have laid them upon long cloths, and are lowering them into the dungeon, with an excess of trouble, which shows them to have been sad dolts in the way of their business. All this, however, was done in order to give the painter an opportunity of showing how well he could manage his colours: the deadly white of the naked bodies contrasts with the cloths on which they are lowered, and the torch sheds a dismal glare down the steps of the dungeon, and on the faces of the murderers. One is struck with the unnatural action, and "double, double, toil and trouble" sort of character of the composition. The "Hubert and Arthur" cannot be charged with the fault of extravagance: it is thoughtful and touching, and tells its story with great simplicity and clearness. These works had their influence: on the 13th of February, 1787, Northcote was made a member of the Academy, and was welcomed to his station by the hand of the President, his master and friend.

He took his seat in the Academy, but he seldom mixed in any of the sharp debates which too frequently happened. Those who are most happy with the pencil are seldom so well gifted in the matter of oratory as their inferior brethren; and as Reynolds in his studio was no encourager of talking, but pronounced it the mark of a second rate mind, Northcote, perhaps, felt that he was not quite so secure of fame, in art, as to risk it by long speeches. He had no great liking to the Royal Academy from the moment of his admission: of the members, individually, he expresses himself, in his conversations, with moderation,

and sometimes kindness ; but of the body corporate he writes with unmitigated bitterness. What was the source of all this hatred? He obtained admission himself as soon as his merits were made public; not a little, it is said, to the mortification of Fuseli, who thought his own genius overlooked; and, as he offered himself for no office, he could not brood in secret over the refusal of a situation for which he had not asked. His dislike, probably, arose from his own inability to make a figure in the public meetings or in the councils, and from the notice which the titled and the opulent took of mere portrait painters, who, considerable as Northcote allowed their merits to be, approached not the dignity which he attached to the school of history and poetry. In those times, a skilful face-painter was the companion of princes and dukes; while he who followed the grand style was thankful when a citizen invited him to his table. I know not what company, save that of his brethren, Northcote in those days kept: that he spoke little in the Academy we have his own assurance. "I remember," said he, "when Sir Joshua wished to propose a monument to Dr. Johnson in St. Paul's, that West got up, and said, the King, he knew, was averse to any thing of the kind; for he had been proposing a similar monument in Westminster Abbey, for a man of the greatest genius and celebrity, — one whose works were in all the cabinets of the curious throughout Europe, — one whose name they would all hear with the greatest respect, — and then it came out, after a long preamble, that he meant Woollett, who had

engraved his 'Death of Wolfe.' I was provoked, and could not help exclaiming, 'My God! do you put Woollett on a footing with such a man as Dr. Johnson, one of the greatest philosophers and moralists that ever lived? We can have a thousand engravers at any time.' There was such a burst of laughter at this:—Dance, a grave gentlemanly man, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks; and Farington used afterwards to say to me, 'Why don't you speak in the Academy; and begin with, My God! as you did when you discomfited West?'"

It is said Northcote felt, like Reynolds, that historical subjects cost him much study, and that the fame which they brought could scarcely be considered as a compensation for the outlay of labour, and the sitters for portraits of which they deprived him. It is very probable, however, that his poetic pictures brought faces to his easel when the time came that poetic pictures by Northcote were no longer wanted,—and, fortunately or unfortunately, that time was not far off. The speculations of Boydell were in a great measure alien to the feeling of the country. In Britain, the love of art is not a common passion: every day we see the merest daubers patronised by the highest of the land; and men unworthy of preparing sculptors' modelling clay employed to make the statues of heroes and legislators. The public runs after whatever is strange or new; and whether it be a so-called genius, or merely some far-fetched oddity, the gaping wonder of the multitude lasts but for a season, and is ever ready to welcome new entertainers. "The Shakspeare Gallery speculation," says one of

Northcote's biographers; "proved an entire failure; and the venerable Boydell, in his patriotic endeavour to still further advance the interest of the arts of his country, made a wreck of his fortune. The *éclat* which certain painters obtained, during the short season of popularity which the Shakspeare Gallery experienced, began also to decline; and it must be confessed that Northcote, and some others, seem to have lost much of their wonted energy from this unfortunate epoch. It is true that they still continued to paint, and laboured long and steadily: but the fire that was kindled on the establishing of this national competition for fame soon burnt with less ardour; and the flame, by degrees, could scarcely warm the genius that gave it birth." Two stimulants expired with this speculation—the competition with Opie, and the money which those historical paintings brought in. The genius of Northcote required to be animated by opposition, and soothed in its hours of toil with the chink of gold; the sound of which, when paid down, was sweet in the artist's ears as the music of Apollo's lute. Had he valued wealth merely as the stepping-stone to independence, comfort, and elegance, his feeling would have been rational and wise; but he was one of those whom the poet reproaches with such love of money as a tame jackdaw has for silver spoons—to hide it rather than to use it. He loved to converse with such people as could instruct him in the art of laying out his gains,—men who frequented the public places, where wealth waits on him who, between guessing and gambling, stumbles darkly upon fortune.

As the failure of the Shakspeare Gallery involved only the disciples of the grand style, the portrait painters, in general, continued to flourish. Northcote joined the band, at that time as numerous nearly as now, and solicited public favour for a variety of portraits, most of which he sent to the Academy Exhibition. Of those works I can give but an imperfect account. I have heard good judges say, that they showed a clear perception of character, with some skill in light and shade, but were deficient in that deep clear elegance of colour which gives to canvasses the hue of nature, were formal of posture, and wanted the easy attitudes of life. It has been remarked, that even his happiest designs look better from the hand of the graver than from his own. Nothing can mark more strongly than this the deficiency of his colouring, and the superiority of his conceptions. Among the works of this period I may particularize his "Grecian Girl;" "The Dominican Friar;" and "Two Sketches of Characters from Shakspeare." The latter were preparations, I have heard, for larger paintings, commissioned in the golden days of Boydell.

In 1791 Northcote removed from Clifford Street to 39. Argyll Street — a house small but commodious. He was now in the forty-fourth year of his age, in the full enjoyment of health, with not a little money in the funds, and a fame on the rise rather than the decrease; with fair employment as a portrait painter, and now and then a small commission in the fancy or historic way. With the brethren of the easel, his sarcastic

sayings and shrewd replies made him respected : a certain dislike which he had picked up or imbibed in matters of existing politics obtained him the notice of the Prince of Wales, and the countenance of some of the Whig leaders; and it was supposed that he looked forward, and not without reason, to an accession of commissions on the death of Reynolds.

The time of Sir Joshua's removal came, but I have not heard that the fortune of his pupil was bettered. In truth, men of greater skill in the popular art of portraiture had arisen, and Northcote saw with concern that public favour flowed to those who could flatter beauty with richer colours than his own. The kindness, too, of Reynolds had been useful to him; but death had extinguished that for ever, and he had now solely to depend upon his own skill and address. The "Devonport Prodigy" was an indifferent courtier: he was one of those unpliant persons

"Who would not flatter Neptune for his trident."

Moreover, he had other drawbacks in the way to success as a portrait painter. In the economy of his household he was sordid, and would not waste his money on silken accommodations for soft and fastidious customers. His sitting-room was ill furnished, ill arranged, and ill swept; and when a lady had overcome all her nicer sensations respecting the studio, she could not be sure that the occupier of the den might not treat her to some of his cynical sallies, and thus rob her face of much of that natural sweetness so essential in female portraiture. That many

ladies, and not of low rank, penetrated into his studio, this narrative may yet show, for no one could be more polite, or gracefully complaisant, or flatteringly agreeable than our painter; but then it was seldom his pleasure to be in that cloudless mood.

It had been for some time whispered that Northcote was busied on a series of pictures, which, uniting the poetry with the realities of life, would reconcile academic elegance and scientific grace to the varied excellence and unregulated loveliness of nature. When, in 1796, those pictures made their appearance in the exhibition of the Academy, it was found that the painter had an aim even beyond this — that it was his ambition to read a great moral lesson to his country. He delineated two young women, of humble condition, clever and charming commencing their careers in the world at the same time, and in the same place: one of them he endowed with natural modesty, and love of truth and virtue, and on the other he bestowed those dangerous passions which hurry beauty to disgrace and ruin. There were ten pictures in all; and the names of these will sufficiently indicate the line of story, and the moral the artist desired to bring out. 1. The Modest Girl and the Wanton, fellow-servants in a gentleman's house. 2. The Wanton revelling with her Companions. 3. Good advice given to both by an old Servant. 4. The Wanton in her bed-chamber. 5. The Modest Girl in her bed-chamber. 6. The Wanton turned out of doors for misconduct. 7. The Modest Girl rejects the illicit addresses of her

Master. 8. The Wanton, dying in poverty and disease, visited by the Modest Girl. 9. The Modest Girl receives the honourable addresses of her Master. 10. The Modest Girl, married to her Master, is led to her coach; while the Wanton, dead in misery, is laid in her grave. The idea (taken of course from Richardson's *Pamela*) was fine, the aim good, and nothing was wanting but dramatic skill and genius to confer variety of character, and dip the whole in those splendid hues which are to painting what nervous words are to poetry. Of all who looked upon those compositions, the painter himself was the only one who thought he had succeeded. The beauty of Northcote's *Modest Girl* seemed as little calculated to lead her to distinction, as the loveliness of his *Wanton* was to lure the seducer and conduct her to ruin. The nature of the subject, as well as the way in which it was handled, recalled Hogarth's *Marriage à-la-Mode* to the memories of men; and it was little to the pleasure of Sir Joshua's pupil, and the admirer of Michael Angelo, to be told that a painter, who had made nature alone his academy, had far excelled him in all that can lend interest to such compositions.

From this time it was observed that he never mentioned Hogarth without a sneer. In one of his conversations with Hazlitt, he said, "Hogarth moulded little figures, and placed them to see how the lights fell, and how the drapery came in — which gave a certain look of reality and relief; but this was not enough to give breadth or grace, and his figures look like puppets after all, or like dolls

dressed up. Who would compare any of those little deformed caricatures of men and women to the figure of St. Paul preaching at Athens? What we justly admire and emulate is that which raises human nature, not that which degrades and holds it up to scorn. St. Giles's is not the only school of art; it is nature to be sure, but we must select nature. Ask the meanest person in the gallery at a play-house which he likes best, the tragedy or the farce; he will tell you without hesitation — the tragedy, and will prefer Mrs. Siddons to the most exquisite buffoon." This is an absurd criticism on Hogarth: that eminent man knew the nature of his undertaking better than to lavish on the children of sin and wickedness the shapes and hues of angels: he is a great moral satirist, and holds up to contempt the persons as well as the minds of those whom he desires to lash. Satiric painting, and historic painting, differ as much in their means and materials, as Homer's Iliad differs from Hudibras. No one knew this better than Northcote himself; and it is one of his unamiable traits, that he nevertheless continually examined the works of Hogarth in comparison with those of Raphael and Reynolds, and condemned him because he had succeeded in spite of his disregard of academic grace and scientific unity. Mere elegance of form is a less alluring thing than most artists are willing to admit; it is in painting as it is in life — the finest form is not always the most fascinating. A woman, whose shape and countenance are not at all according to the accepted principles of beauty, will charm

men more by the force of sentiment alone, than others do on whom physical perfections have descended in a shower. Now and then, in the writings of Northcote, he speaks favourably of the genius of Hogarth; but he seems unwilling to say in what way it is manifested. He condemns his compositions, one and all, as exhibitions of puppets; declares he has no more right to be named as a painter than Fielding has; and strikes him out of the roll of artists, by saying that Reynolds was born immediately before the death of Kneller, "thus perpetuating the hereditary descent of the art."

Having failed in his attempt in the moral line, he returned to portraiture and to historic composition, as to studies from which he had been against his will withheld. Of mere portraiture he almost always spoke in a tone nearly allied to contempt: but then he imagined that Northcote's portraits were something better than likenesses; he regarded *them* as demi-historical at least. When he painted his own head, which he did often, he put on a splendid cap of green velvet; assumed a sort of Titian-like air; regarded himself complacently in the glass, and strove hard to make his labours on the canvass rival, or rather surpass, the shadow before him. While engaged on a head of himself, he entered into conversation with Hazlitt concerning the great litigated point of history and portrait. "Portrait," said he, "often runs into history, and history into portrait, without our knowing it. Expression is common to both, and that is the chief difficulty. The greatest history paint-

ers have always been able portrait painters. How should a man paint a thing in motion, if he cannot paint it still? But the great point is to catch the prevailing look and character; if you are master of this, you can make almost what use of it you please. If a portrait has force, it will do for history; and if history is well painted, it will do for portrait. This is what gave dignity to Sir Joshua; his portraits have always that determined air and character, that you know what to think of them as if you had seen them engaged in the most decided action. Many of the groups of Raphael in the Vatican are only collections of fine portraits. West, Barry, and others, pretended to despise portrait, because they could not do it, and it would only expose their want of truth and nature. If you can give the *look*, you need not fear painting history."

His deliberate judgments in art are seldom right, while his casual remarks have often great merit. A man may be a fine portrait painter, without possessing those high qualities of imagination essential to a painter of history. A sitter brings his features and his expression with him, and the limner has only to transfer them to his canvass, with such modifications as his taste may suggest: this is no difficult exploit. We see men on all sides flourishing, like the green bay tree, in the manufacture of heads, who can no more carry them into the performance of noble actions, where one sentiment rules the whole as the wind sways the tree-tops, than they could square a circle, or invent the perpetual motion. It is, besides, seldom, indeed, in life, that we can find heads so

fine in form, and so dignified in expression, as historical painting requires. Few, certainly, of the portraits painted by Northcote himself would be accepted by the world as substitutes for heroes.

Of the historical pictures which he painted along with his portraits, I shall render no very detailed account. They were neither very numerous nor remarkable, whether for dignity of conception or natural elegance of colour. "The Landing of the Prince of Orange at Torbay" is, as a composition, cold, correct, and lifeless: it was, however, well enough received: the portraits of the chief leaders of the enterprise were inserted; but there was a bustle without dignity, and a sort of stir as if galvanism had set the dead into motion. "The Leopards" also pleased many. He prided himself justly on his beasts and birds: he could deal better with physical than with mental power. "Jacob blessing the Sons of Joseph" is a quiet, serene picture: the old man seems not to feel the worth of what he gives; and the youths receive the benediction with a calmness which some critics mistook for indifference. The "St. Francis" was a portrait, and worthy of the painter. "The Mother's Prayer" was reposing and graceful; so was "The Girl reading;" nor should the picture of "Two Monkeys" be forgotten: there was skill in the grouping, and much nature in the character of these natives of the desert. The work, however, which made the most favourable impression on the public mind was "Argyll visited, while asleep in Prison, by his chief Enemy." There is an air

of tranquillity and innocence about the slumbering nobleman, and of awe, not unmingled with remorse, about his visiter, exceedingly well portrayed. "When I was doing," said Northcote, "the figures of Argyll in prison, and of his enemy who comes and finds him asleep, I had a great difficulty to encounter in conveying the expression of the last; indeed, I did it from myself: I wanted to give a look of mingled remorse and admiration, and when I found that others saw this look in the sketch I had made, I left off. By going on, I might lose it again. There is a point of felicity, which, whether you fall short of, or have gone beyond it, can only be determined by the effect on the unprejudiced observer. You cannot be always with your picture, to explain it to others; it must be left to speak for itself. Those who stand before their pictures, and make fine speeches about them, do themselves a world of harm: a painter should cut out his tongue, if he wishes to succeed." There are few of the pictures of Northcote that are not clear in conception, and intelligible in story.

In the race of portraiture he was outstripped by some who began to run long after he started; and it was with but little philosophy that he witnessed their fortune. Against Lawrence he particularly directed the shafts of his sarcasm: he had opposed his admission to the Academy, on the just and proper grounds that he had not reached the age contemplated by the rules; and when the patronage of the King forced him in, he resented the intrusion as an attack upon the independence of the body. All this might be right; but the con-

tinuance of his resentment against the rival artist must, I am afraid, be set down to that unamiable disposition which sickens at other men's success. He always denied that Lawrence had any genius: his men's heads, he said, were effeminate, and his women's licentious; his style of drawing, and his mode of colouring, equally displeased him: in fact, he was resolved not to acknowledge excellence which he could not but feel. With Fuseli his contests were sharp and frequent; and though they mutually dreaded each other, they never hesitated to plunge into the strife of wit, more to the amusement of their brethren than their own credit. These two men were reckoned the wits of the Academy; but their sallies were rather those of rough, ready-witted boors, than of polished gentlemen: there were no delicate touches on sensitive places; all was, on both sides, coarse vigour and extravagant caricature.

From 1800, for the space of a dozen years, Northcote exhibited some sixty out of the numberless portraits which he painted. Of these, very few were of men of genius: he was sparing of his time and colours upon talent, for that is generally too poor to be a good paymaster. If we except the portrait of himself,—a delineation which he liked,—the head of Godwin seems the only one to which true talent can lay claim. To the author of "Caleb Williams" the painter appears to have been much attached; and, if other proof were wanting than the outlay of canvass, colour, and time, all of which Northcote considered, it may be found in his Conversations. "It is extraordinary," said he, on one occasion,

"how particular the world sometimes are, and what prejudices they take up against people. There is Godwin, who is a very good man: yet, when I wished to introduce him at the house of a lady who lives in a round of society, and has a strong tinge of the blue stocking, she would not hear of it: the sound of the name seemed to terrify her: it was his writings she was afraid of: he is a profligate only in theory." The lady had daughters, and was afraid they might think of carrying into practice some of the philosophical views about matrimony, and so forth, contained in Godwin's extraordinary history of Mary Wolstonecroft. Hazlitt, to whom the painter's words were addressed, answered, "He has written against matrimony, and has been twice married; he has scouted all the common-place duties, and yet is a good husband and a kind father. He is a strange composition of contrary qualities. He is a cold formalist, and full of ardour and enthusiasm of mind; dealing in magnificent projects and petty cavils; naturally dull, but brilliant by dint of study; pedantic and playful; a dry logician, and a writer of romances." The personal virtue of Mr. Godwin's life has, for half a century at least, I believe, been as little liable to question, as the strength of his genius, or the pernicious tendency of his early doctrines, moral and political.

Though the love of historic painting was well nigh extinct in the land, Northcote was slow, or unwilling to abandon a line of study which had brought him into fame. As he considered those pictures which he exhibited to be the best, I shall proceed to notice them in the order in

which they made their appearance:— 1. The Cradle Hymn. 2. A Girl in a Show of Animals. 3. A Bacchante. 4. A Lady passing the Alps. 5. Vulture and Snake. 6. Christ the Good Shepherd. 7. Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban. 8. Tiger Hunting. 9. Buck Hunting. 10. A Girl going to Market. 11. The Angels appearing to the Shepherds. 12. Romulus and Remus. 13. Death of the Earl of Argyll. 14. The Disobedient Prophet of Judah slain by a Lion. 15. Lion Hunting. 16. Joseph and his Brethren. Of these, some are natural and vigorous; some forced and exaggerated; but all are marked by a simplicity of conception, and an elevation of thought, which seldom forsook him in his compositions. The picture of "The Vulture and Snake" has been commended by all critics, and admired by all spectators. The former seems uttering that sharp, shrill cry, which announces his love of carnage; and the latter raises his slim and speckled neck, and prepares for resistance. The picture of "Prospero and Miranda" is from that fine scene in the *Tempest*, where the father relates to the daughter the cause of his exile. Miranda is supposed to be saying, —

— "You have often
 Begun to tell me what I am; but stopp'd
 And left me to a bootless inquisition;
 Concluding, *Stay not yet.*"

Had something of the wildness of Fuseli mingled with the composure of Northcote, we might, perhaps, have had in him a great painter. As it is, one finds in almost all his historical compositions little of that vital fire, without which the fairest

forms are but clods of the valley, and the most gorgeous draperies a waste of colour. He knew — no one knew better — what was necessary to be done ; but his imagination was of a low order, and even his skill of hand none of the best. His Scripture pieces are generally heavy and uninspired. "Christ the Good Shepherd" has little of the divinity. "The Disobedient Prophet" is destroyed by the lion, without exciting our feelings ; and "Joseph and his Brethren" recalls, to the disadvantage of the artist, the simple pathos of the Scriptures.

Northcote, in the year 1813, made his appearance as a regular biographer. He had been long known as a writer of little essays on art ; critiques on pictures ; and occasional sets of verses. His articles on Originality in painting, on Imitators and Collectors, and on Disappointed genius, had excited but moderate interest among artists ; nor had his character of Opie, or his original sketch of Reynolds, raised high expectations ; while his best verses were obviously inspired, when

" The Muses on their racks

Scream like the winding of ten thousand jacks.

Neither in verse, nor in prose had he made much impression on any one. In the former he was deficient in elevation and fluency, and in the latter his style was dry and hard, without unsolicited happiness of expression, or originality of sentiment. The announcement, therefore, of a formal "Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds," was but coldly received in London ; though in the provinces, the bookseller's advertisement, that it

contained original anecdotes of the great painter's illustrious contemporaries, and was written by the ingenious James Northcote, his pupil and friend, had some influence.

When this "Life" came out, it was quickly followed by a rumour, which has not yet ceased, that Northcote was not the real author, but had employed a more skilful hand than his own. The Memoir, however, bears on every page the plainest marks of his own hand. That some one aided him, to clear a passage from obscurity, or give point to an anecdote, may be allowed, without damage to his reputation : he has himself informed us, that he employed a certain Mr. Laird, who lived in Peterborough Court, Fleet Street, to see it through the press ; and this may have occasioned the rumour. The book was not received with much applause. The narrative is, on the whole, tedious and weak ; nor does it often make amends for general languor, by brilliant detached passages, which, like wells in the desert, induce us, as we drink, to forget the arid path over which we travelled.

Even Northcote's love of Sir Joshua may be questioned. Now and then an ill-concealed dislike flashes through his praise ; and it is certain that the whole "Life" leaves the impression of a schemer. He would, however, in private conversation, allow no one to speak sharply of Reynolds but himself ; and whenever he heard any one criticise his paintings with a leaning to the rigorous, he instantly interposed. On one occasion he declared, that in painting, Michael Angelo and Raphael were beasts compared to

Sir Joshua. It was natural that he should support the fame of his master; in allowing any one to lower him, he felt he was permitting a blow to be given to the very keystone of the arch of British art. Though I cannot rank the Memoir of Reynolds high as a literary composition, nor allow it much merit for the original vigour or accuracy of its sentiments, it is, nevertheless, valuable as a record of sayings which would otherwise have perished, and of anecdotes which might have missed a chronicler. That Northcote himself imagined he had written something wondrous, is well known.

What we chiefly miss in this work is that brief and lucid summary of character in which Johnson excelled. We are left to gather, from the surface of six hundred pages, Sir Joshua's merits as an artist, and his manners as a man. One learns more, in fact, about the President, from Northcote's Conversations than from his Memoir. He opened his heart when he had not a pen in his hand. "Sir Joshua," he remarked to Hazlitt, "was not spoiled by flattery, and yet he had as much of it as any body need have. He was looking out to see what the world thought of him, or thinking what figure he should make by the side of Correggio or Vandyke, not pluming himself on being a better painter than some one in the next street, or surprised that the people at his own table should speak in praise of his pictures." Of his portraits he thus expressed himself:—"If I was to compare Reynolds with Vandyke and Titian, I should say that Vandyke's portraits are like pictures — very perfect

ones, no doubt; Sir Joshua's like the reflection in a looking-glass; and Titian's like the real people. There is an atmosphere of light and shade about Sir Joshua's, which neither of the others have in the same degree, together with a vagueness which gives them a visionary and romantic character, and makes them seem like dreams or vivid recollections of persons we have seen. I never could mistake Vandyke's for any thing but pictures, and I got up to them to examine them as such: when I see a fine Sir Joshua, I can neither suppose it to be a mere picture, nor a man; and I almost involuntarily turn back to ascertain that it is not some one behind me reflected in the glass." When Hazlitt observed, that he thought Reynolds had more resemblance to Rembrandt than to either Titian or Vandyke, as he enveloped objects in the same brilliant haze of a previous mental conception,—“Yes,” he said; “but though Sir Joshua borrowed a great deal, he drew largely from himself; or, rather, it was a strong and peculiar feeling of nature working in him, and forcing its way out in spite of all impediments, and that made whatever he touched his own. In spite of his deficiency in drawing, and his want of academic rules and a proper education, you see this breaking out like the devil in all his works: it is this that has stamped him. There is a charm in his portraits—a mingled softness and force, a grasping at the end, with nothing harsh or unpleasant in the means—that you will find nowhere else. He may go out of fashion for a time; but you must come back to him again, while a thousand imitators and academic triflers are forgotten.

This proves him to have been a real genius." In conversation Northcote spoke clearly, concisely, and fluently. In writing he paused and pondered, doled out dull words, and was neither eloquent nor easy.

As the Memoir was the fruit of his leisure hours, his pencil had continued its labours: the number of his sitters was yet considerable, and the intervals between their hours of going and coming he usually gave to some historical subject. Of the latter, "The Judgment of Solomon" was one on which he bestowed great pains. It met, however, with little approbation from the world; and, among his brethren, Fuseli was mercilessly sarcastic on the way in which the story was told. "How do you like my picture?" enquired the painter. "Oh, excellent well," was the reply; "the story is capitally told, — you have, indeed, suited the action to the word. Your Solomon holds out his fingers at the child like a pair of tailor's sheers, and says, 'Cut it.'" Nor was he much more successful with other works of a like nature drawn from profane sources. "The Marriage of Richard, brother of Edward the Fifth, to Lady Anne Mowbray," suffered in comparison with "Arthur and Hubert;" nor was his "Princess Bridget Plantagenet, fourth daughter of Edward IV., consigned to the care of the Abbess of Dartford," of superior effect. They were, in truth, formal compositions, deficient in grace and warmth. Of "The Burial of Christ," and "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," I have no desire to speak; such subjects, unless embodied by a masterly hand, and dipt in such light and shade as

Titian excelled in, had better remain in the original simplicity of the Scripture narrative. The latter picture was the last historical painting which the artist exhibited; this was in 1823: he was now seventy-seven years old.

During Northcote's brightest days, his fancy required excitement; the mercury of his imagination had to be raised to the height of history by artificial heat. His pictures were the result of painful study and long-continued toil. He experienced none of those glowing visitations of the Muse of painting, when form, expression, and colour, come by something like inspiration. He drew, he touched and retouched, painted, and pondered, consulted all comers, and never seemed properly possessed with the sentiment of his subject. Now, instead of his hand acquiring ease and skill from time, the frosts of age seemed to benumb it; he touched the canvass with a cold and still a colder touch; his historical paintings became but the shadows of those he executed in his youthful days. This falling off, however, he was unwilling to perceive; his ambition to excel exceeded his powers; and he continued to paint while he found pleasure in the pursuit, and friends applauded. Some of the Scripture subjects of his latter days are heavy and spiritless; yet he imagined that what failed to please his brethren or satisfy the critics might do well enough for the devout; and, accordingly, it was his practice to christen any rejected thing an altar-piece, and offer it to some churchwarden, of the race that believe one piece of stained canvass to be as good as another. One:

Of these productions found its way into the new church in Chelsea, where its extreme heaviness contrasts strangely with the light and graceful architecture around. The painter went on drawing and colouring to the last : critics, at length, respected his advanced age, and were silent or gentle ; while some of his intimate friends saw virtues in the weaknesses of an artist who had amassed forty thousand pounds, and was without heirs.

During the latter years of Northcote's life he became acquainted with William Hazlitt, a man of many trades and many talents. He was originally a painter ; then a lecturer, essayist, novelist, critic, and biographer ;—moreover, he was known far and wide for the boldness of his opinions and the bitterness of his sarcasms. They soon became intimate. Hazlitt had great powers of pleasing, when he chose to exert them : he made himself acceptable to the painter by remarks on art ; by his sly mode of touching on the characters of those for whom Northcote had no good will ; and more particularly by asserting, in all companies, that the venerable painter was the greatest wit of the age, and an oracle in art and literature. No one could be for ten minutes in Hazlitt's company without hearing allusions to Northcote's works, and references made to his opinions. Nor did he confine his admiration to mere speech : he noted down, or stored away in his memory, the sharpest of his remarks, and the most memorable of his sayings ; and when his collection grew large, arranged them, and published them, in monthly sections, as *Conversations*

between Northcote and himself, under the title of "Boswell Redivivus." These papers attracted at the time a good deal of notice: the earliest dealt cautiously with names and works; but success rendered the writer bolder, and his Essays by and by discussed the merits of the living as well as of the dead with more force than delicacy. Northcote was aware of their publication, and, for a while, enjoyed the temporary *éclat* which they brought.

But the sayings of the painter, however amusing, were not those of one who weighed well his words and spoke from reflection. He had not a little of envy in his nature: he imagined that, in the race of reputation, he had been conquered more by stratagem and wile than speed of foot; and though he considered that the taste of the people was vulgar and depraved, he seemed not unwilling to resent, as a personal affront, all fame which eclipsed his own. As many excelled him in art, he found objects enow on whom he could direct the shafts of his satire. While he talked, he grew heated with a sense of his own worthiness, and handled the characters of others with a recklessness and ferocity unbecoming in one so old, and who had so much to thank the world for. He had acquired fame equal to his deservings, and fortune greater than he could enjoy; and yet he talked of want of discernment and patronage on the part of the public towards himself, though men his superiors in genius were unnoticed, and could hardly find bread and water. He generally spoke under the influence of excited feelings, and we may, therefore, repose but a mo-

derate degree of trust in whatever he said. "It will never do," he said one day to Hazlitt, "to take things literally that are uttered in a moment of irritation. You do not express your own opinion, but one as opposite as possible to that of the person who has provoked you. You get as far from a person you have taken a pique against as you can, just as you turn off the pavement to get out of the way of a chimney-sweeper ; but it is not to be supposed you prefer walking in the mud, for all that. I have often been ashamed, myself, of speeches I have made in that way, which have been repeated to me as good things, when all I meant was, that I would say any thing sooner than agree to the nonsense or affectation I heard. You then set yourself against what you think a wrong bias in another, and are not like a wall, but a buttress, as far from the right line as your antagonist."

Personal as many of his diatribes are, or uttered in a spirit of spleen and contradiction, they nevertheless abound with opinions and remarks, showing much knowledge of human nature, and considerable taste in literature and art. It is true that the dexterous hand of Hazlitt trimmed them for the public eye, and gave force to the sarcasms and acrimony to the invectives ; but though he put a little worinwood amid the painter's lavender, I cannot but regard most of the sentiments as those of Northcote. All, more or less, bear the impress of the man. I shall transcribe a few of these, in the words of "Boswell Redivivus :"—"Lord Byron, I am told, said he,

“did not wish to be thought merely a great poet, he wished to be something different from every body else. As to nobility, there were many others before him, so that he could not rely upon that; and then as to poetry, there are so many wretched creatures that pretend to the name, that he looked at it with disgust. He thought himself as distinct from them as the stars in the firmament. It comes to what Sir Joshua used to say, that a man who is at the head of his profession is above it.” The first part of this is just, the rest erroneous. If Byron disliked to be thought a poet, because of so many wretched pretenders below him, he might have disliked to be thought a man on the same principle, for the world abounds with two-legged creatures, grovelling and vile, who call themselves children of Adam. The painter is nearer the truth when he says, “The world in general, as Miss Reynolds used to say with reference to her brother, think no more of a painter than they do of a fiddler, or a dancing-master, or a maker of piano-fortes; and so of a poet. I have always said of that dispute, about burying Lord Byron in Poet’s Corner, that he would have resisted it violently, could he have known of it. Not but that there were many very eminent names there with whom he would have liked to have associated; but then there were others that he would look down upon. If they had laid him there he would have got up again. I’ll tell you where they should have laid him: if they had buried him with the kings in Henry VII.’s Chapel, he would have had no objection to that.”

Northcote always seemed unable to appreciate the fine genius of Wordsworth : when Hazlitt said, that the great poet of the Lakes had added one original feature to our poetry, which Byron had not, the painter replied,—“ Yes ; but the little bit he has added is not enough. None but great objects can be seen at a distance. If posterity looked at it with your eyes, they might think his poetry curious and pretty ; but consider how many Scotts, Byrons, and Johnsons there will be in the next hundred years ; how many reputations will rise and sink in that time : and do you think, amid these conflicting and important claims, such trifles as descriptions of daisies and idiot boys will not be swept away in the tide of time, like straws and weeds by the torrent ? No : the world can only keep in view the principal and most perfect works of human ingenuity ;— such works that, from their unity, their completeness, their polish, have the stamp of immortality upon them, and seem indestructible, like an element of nature ; I fear your friend Wordsworth is not one.”—

“ I see,” he observed to Hazlitt, “ you place Scott above Byron. The question is, not which keeps longest on the wing, but which soars highest ; and I cannot help thinking there are passages in Lord Byron which are not to be surpassed. All other modern poets appear vulgar in comparison. I agree, however, in your admiration of the *Waverley* novels : they are very fine. The author, like Cervantes, has raised the idea of human nature, not as Richardson has attempted it, by affectation and false varnish, but by bringing out

what there is really fine in it, under a cloud of disadvantages. All that can be said against Sir Walter is, that he has never made a *whole*. There is an infinite number of delightful incidents and characters, but they are disjointed and scattered. This is one of Fielding's merits: his novels are regular compositions, with what the ancients called a beginning, a middle, and an end: every circumstance is foreseen and provided for; and the conclusion of the story turns round, as it were, to meet the beginning."

For the masters in art, Northcote seems to have had little reverence, particularly those who were English born. "Hogarth," he said, "does not lift us above ourselves: our curiosity may be gratified by seeing what men are, but our pride must be soothed with seeing them made better. Why else is *Paradise Lost* preferred to *Hudibras*? but because the one aggrandises our notions of human nature, and the other degrades it. Who will make any comparison between a *Madonna* of Raphael and a drunken prostitute by Hogarth? Do we not feel more respect for an inspired apostle than for a blackguard in the streets? Raphael points out the highest perfection of which the human form and faculties are capable, and Hogarth their lowest degradation, or most wretched perversion. Look at his attempts to paint the good or beautiful, and see how faint the impressions of these were in his mind." The painter wilfully closed his eyes to the true light of the question. The object of Raphael was to bestow on the human figure a lustre of person, and a godlike elevation

of mind. He desired to connect the spectator's thoughts with religion and heaven by the contemplation of what was beautiful and good. The object of Hogarth was to exhibit the hideousness of vice; to hold the burning light of his genius over the sinks of public infamy, and show men the purer way. The powers of Fuseli made little impression on Northcote's mind; he only saw his extravagance: nor did he entertain a high opinion of his conversational talents. "There are few people," said he, "who can argue: Fuseli was one of them. He could throw out brilliant and striking things; but if you at all questioned him, he could no more give an answer than a child three years old. He had no resources, nor any *corps de reserve* of argument, beyond his first line of battle; but that was imposing and glittering enough. Probably one ought not to expect two things together; for to produce a startling and immediate effect, one must keep pretty much upon the surface, and the search after truth is a slow and obscure process."

Among the early friends of Northcote, the Mudges were the most distinguished; and it was generally supposed that he entertained a high regard for a family which produced men of genius and science, as well as generosity. To Zachary Mudge, Reynolds himself is supposed to have been indebted for aid in his discourses, as well as for acts of kindness when he commenced his career; he looked on all his friend said to be law, both in taste and morals: any question that Mudge settled, he considered

as settled beyond dispute ; and from him he borrowed his favourite maxim in painting, — “ True beauty is the medium of form.” Northcote was still deeper in debt to the Mudges than his master : by them his works had been introduced to the world, and himself to Reynolds ; and, in his better moods, he had no objection to remember all these things, and speak of them thankfully. But in one of his sarcastic fits, when a sense of other men’s fame was strong upon him, it was his pleasure to speak of the elder Mudge not only with less reverence than his worth and learning merited but in a style harsh and acrimonious. All this, and perhaps more, was told to the world in the Conversations, by Hazlitt. This produced remonstrance, and then a visit, from Mr. Rosdew of Plymouth, the nephew of the Mudge whose memory had been attacked. On being expostulated with, “ he broke out,” — I quote the words Rosdew, — “ into the most violent expressions of rage and passion. He called Hazlitt a papist, wretch, a viper, whom he would stab if he could get at him. He said, when he first read the article, he thought for three days it would have killed him : in short, he said so much, and so warmly, that I pitied him, and left him with warm feelings of regard as before ; considering as he declared, that his words had been misrepresented, and feeling what he had said of the Life of Reynolds, and elsewhere, about the family.”

The remonstrance of Rosdew induced Northcote to write an earnest letter to Campbell the poet, at that time editor of the magazine

which the Conversations were published:—
“I have been informed,” says our painter, “that you are a principal director of ‘The New Monthly Magazine;’ and if you are, I must be excused for making my complaint. I find there are frequently papers in this publication, entitled, *very modestly*, ‘Boswell Redivivus,’ insinuating, that the hero of this trivial stuff is to be compared to the immortal Dr. Johnson. This person seems pretty clearly to be made out to be myself. Good God! do you not feel this to be dreadful! But this is not the worst of the matter. I have often, in my vain moments, said that I should be pleased to receive morning visits at times from the devil, because I might be amused by his knowledge of the world, and diverted by his wit, and should be sufficiently on my guard to avoid his snares. This impious desire has indeed been granted unto me, and ‘Boswell Redivivus’ is the consequence.

“You will scarcely pity a calamity which my presumption has brought upon myself. I have at those times, in the closet, indulged in idle conversation, not knowing who I was with, in all the confidence of friendship. I thought no more of what was said by either of us afterwards, concluding that it had passed off in air; but I now find, to my sorrow, that this despicable and worthless trash has been treasured up, and is proclaimed at the market cross, where my family connections and dearest friends are brought forward to public inspection, with their names at full length, properly spelt, in order to prevent any possible mistake being made; and things

uttered in idle merriment now stamped in everlasting print, not as I represented them, but as speeches of cold, dry, and hateful malignity, and grossly different from my meaning; and I am now kept in perpetual torture, not knowing what each new month may bring forth. Good God! do you not think such a situation terrible?

"I have been told that these detestable papers have been thought amusing. I do not wonder at that, — the world delights in mischief, and a sufferer is always gratifying as an object of triumph. But I hope you will not calmly see me sacrificed or ruined: you can have no reason for cruelty towards me: I have never injured or done harm to you; and surely, as a moralist, you ought not to sow discord and propagate hatred in families, or between friends, and make them detest each other, and all for a little profit, or a little fun. If you go on in this manner, you will drive me to distraction, and bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, by being in league with a wretch who has betrayed me, and who is gone to France to escape the vengeance of those he has injured."

This letter, written in the year 1827, is sufficiently strong regarding Northcote's detestation of Hazlitt: there are brave words in the way of loathing and scorn in it; nor is the answer of Campbell calculated to screen his correspondent from the vengeance of the artist. "I am afflicted beyond measure," says the poet, "at finding my own inattention to have been the means of wounding the feelings of a venerable man of genius. Dictate the form and manner of

my attempting to atone for having unconsciously injured you, if I can make you any atonement. The *infernal* Hazlitt shall never more be permitted to write for the 'New Monthly.' I mean not to palliate my own want of watchfulness over the magazine, which has occasioned such a paper being admitted; I only tell you the honest truth, that a crisis in my affairs, which is never likely to occur again, fatally tempted me, this last month, to trust the revision of some part of the number to the care and delicacy of another person; that person has, like myself, slept over his charge. I am willing to acknowledge to you publicly, that oversight, and not intention, produced the insertion of this obnoxious matter. In the mean time, suffer me to say, without meaning to retract my apology to you, that I think you somewhat forget the ancient and firm hold which you possess over public esteem, when you attach so much importance to this misrepresentation of your opinions and conversation. In reality, as I deserve to be punished for the paper, so I believe that I suffer more in the public opinion from it than you do. At all events, be assured, that if Hazlitt attempts to report your conversations, he must break out in a new quarter."

To this letter Northcote returned the following answer:—"My good Sir, I am very much obliged by your exceeding kind letter, which was heart's ease to me, and should have answered sooner, but that I could not determine on what was best for me to do. Your kind interference has greatly relieved me, and I think nothing more can be done for my good. The mischief is already

complete, and I must patiently suffer the consequences. My only remedy now must depend upon my profound silence; and I have only to beg of you that my name, as having interfered in any way respecting those, to me, awful papers, may never be mentioned in your magazine, because it would be avowing a connection with them which I wish to avoid." To set himself right with Rosdew was the next step of the painter. He copied the letters, and adding the following; forwarded the whole to Plymouth, 17th August, 1827:—"Dear Sir, I have sent you exact copies of the letters which passed at an early period of the publication between myself and Mr. Campbell, to prove to you how much those hateful papers annoyed me; but I hope it is now entirely put a stop to, and that I shall be left at rest."

The friends of Northcote were pleased at this intrepid conduct, and felt persuaded that his conversations had been misrepresented. They saw, in the stern language which he had applied to Hazlitt, an assurance of all companionship being broken up between them, and that the latter would never more be permitted to be a visiter in Argyll Place. Yet some of the painter's more penetrating acquaintances doubted his perfect sincerity in the whole affair; and one or two even went so far as to say, that the Hazlitt who had been reviled as papist, wretch, viper, and the representative of Satan on earth, was the bosom friend of Northcote still, and might be found, during the evenings, aiding the old man to while away the hours in the composition of fa-

bles, essays, and bits of biography. That Northcote had not been seriously averse to the publication of his conversations was perfectly well known : he coveted the notoriety which they brought, but disliked the controversies in which they involved him. It was his custom after this to say, when more than usually communicative, to a visitor, " Now, sir, don't print what I have said to you." All this outward show did not long conceal from Rosdew that the painter had imposed on him with well simulated anger, and cleverly acted distress. He learnt, to his surprise, that Hazlitt, so far from being in danger of a stab from the man whom he had betrayed and misrepresented, was his familiar visitor, and had moreover found a place in his will. He could not trust his own feelings in writing a letter on this topic, and the task was undertaken by a mutual friend of both, Mr. Dunsterville, whose remonstrance brought the following reply from the painter: — " I have just received your unkind letter, which surprised me ; a letter which I would not have condescended to answer, had it not come from you, an old, kind friend. As I know the natural goodness of your disposition, it is my opinion that you have some person who works upon you, in hope to produce an enmity between us. You threaten me with more thundering letters, which, if they come, I shall throw into the fire unanswered. It is impossible for me to explain this nonsense, therefore pray torment me no more, as, at present, my great age and load of infirmities render me unfit for such silly matters. The only part of

your letter which gave me pleasure was to find that you were in the enjoyment of good health, by the goodness of your writing, and the spirit shown in your willingness to fight in single combat ; but as that is not my case at present, I beg leave to decline the challenge."

This explanation was so little to the satisfaction of Mr. Rosdew, that he turned the painter's portrait out of his collection, where it had long hung, among other heads of the worthies of Devon by the hand of Reynolds. On hearing this, Northcote wrote the following singular letter to Mr. Dunsterville:—"I am sorry to find that Mr. Rosdew cannot forget the chance blow that has been given to his relative. I have no objection to his dismissal of my picture out of his sight, if it has any tendency to move his passion. Greater, wiser, and better men than I can pretend to be, have had their portraits treated with the greatest indignities ; but the only way to make it safe would be to destroy it, lest, in some future time, another possessor, of a different mind, may again take it into favour. Mr. Rosdew does not seem to know the situation of those who are by circumstances exposed to the notice or criticisms of the public, and are obliged, by necessity, to be on civil terms with those whom in their hearts they hate, such as newspaper conductors and their assistants, or else they may torment you to death,—and no rank or station is out of their power. Even the King cannot escape ; but ministers of state, noble persons, authors, painters, players, musicians, are their common game,—and no morning passes but newspapers make

many hearts ache. I never sought the acquaintance of Mr. Hazlitt in my life; but I do not know how to get rid of him without personally affronting him, which would draw his *vengeance* upon me;—self-preservation is the first law of nature, and I am not much to blame in availing myself of it. When the error was committed, I was ignorant of his disposition. I have now nothing more to do, but to be very cautious not to communicate any matter for him to repeat, and yet not to make him hate me; and of two evils, it is better to have my portrait treated with contempt, than to forbid him my house, and draw his vengeance on my head. I remember a wise remark of Gainsborough the painter, who used to say, that nothing was so easy as to make acquaintances, but it was often a devil of a task to get rid of them. Although that which Hazlitt said of old Mr. Mudge struck deeply into my heart, yet Hazlitt has given me many a painful thought on other matters; therefore I cannot but admire the grateful attachment which Mr. Rosdew's conduct shows towards a family so full of virtue and genius as that of the Mudges, which proves the purity and goodness of his own heart; and if he thinks I have done wrong, I must forgive his resentment for the beauty of the motive." This letter terminated the correspondence respecting the Conversations; and Mr. Rosdew bade the matter farewell, in these severe words:—"Ingratitude, envy, meanness, and inordinate self-conceit, together with falsehood, have marked the painter's conduct respecting the Mudges. To these I may add extreme vanity; to gratify

which he would sacrifice any thing — not excepting his money !”

No one can say that Northcote came out of this sharp controversy free from blame. If he looked on Hazlitt as having abused his confidence, or as really meriting any of the hard epithets he had showered on him to a third person, he ought to have forbidden the man his house. But in truth, if Northcote had stood in such dread of Hazlitt as his last letter represents, he would not have written with such freedom about him to men who read his letters publicly. The complaint addressed to Campbell was as likely to kindle the indignation of such a man as Hazlitt, as forbidding him his house. In fact, another reason, than fear of the consequences, influenced the mind of the painter : all the time this fierce controversy was raging, Hazlitt was busy, arranging for Northcote his “ One Hundred Fables, original and select,” which were published in the following year ; preparing a second volume, not yet published, of similar compositions ; and taking notes, and making memorandums, for the work called “ Titian and his Times,” which appeared in the year 1830. Our artist was old and feeble : he daily tottered into his painting room, and with his palette on his thumb, and a canvass before him, painted, or seemed to paint ; looking all the while for the dropping in of friends, that he might be cheered with talk about art and literature, or the rise and fall of stocks. When it was imagined he had set his house in order, and resigned all thought of further labours, out came the volume of Fables, illustrated, after the manner

of Bewick, with designs chiefly from his own hand. Of his apologues it may be said, that they are generally judicious, and easily comprehended; that the language is plain and simple, the morals well drawn, and applicable to life; but that they are nearly all deficient in originality. Those related in verse are less natural and easy than the others. The accompanying designs are much more creditable to Northcote. Some of them are elegant alike in conception and execution. I cannot say, however, that any of them leave the impression of great power.

There is some sharp satire and good criticism scattered about the fables; *e. g.* — “A glow-worm, well knowing that he was admired for his extraordinary splendour whenever he made his appearance on a dark evening, grew exceedingly proud and conceited upon the notice that was taken of him, and could not rest contented in his humble retreat in a hedge, among the insects his neighbours, but burnt with inward fire to come forward and display himself in bright daylight to a gazing crowd of admirers, more discerning and more numerous than in the gloom of night; and, accordingly, having placed himself in a most conspicuous situation, he had the mortification of being informed that his beauties were not of so sterling a quality as to bear a close inspection, for thus exposed in sunshine he appeared to be a mere grub. There are too many,” says the moral, “who appear very excellent when in an humble station of life, but are found very ill qualified to move in a sphere more lofty and splendid. As we become more exalted in our

stations, we become more the immediate objects of criticism, and subject to the shafts of envy: as our power is increased, and our field of action is enlarged, our task becomes doubly difficult to escape doing wrong; and those follies which would pass unnoticed in an obscure station, when practised by the great are exposed to all eyes, and meet with universal condemnation." To this fable the artist has added a riotous scene, where loud laughter and excessive drinking abound, in the midst of which a minstrel is wasting the sweetness of his music and the melody of his voice on the careless and the profligate. The construction of the fable is faulty. The glow-worm, in desiring a place of distinction during the day, exposed herself to contempt, if you will, or pity, but not to envy.

Northcote had doubtless suffered in his day from the pertness and snip-snap criticisms of connoisseurs, and it is thus he seeks to repay them. — "A bee, flying out of his hive, said to a cuckoo, who was chanting on a bush hard by, — 'Peace! why don't you leave off your harsh monotonous pipe? There never was a bird who had such a tiresome unvaried song as you have. Cuckoo, cuckoo, and cuckoo, again and again.' — 'Oh!' cries the cuckoo, 'I wonder you find fault with my note, which is at least as much varied as your labours; for if you had a hundred hives to fill, you would make them all exactly alike: if I invent nothing new, surely every thing you do is as old as the creation of the world.' To which the bee replied, — 'I allow it; but in useful arts the want of variety is never an objection; while in

works of taste and amusement, monotony is of all things to be avoided.' The cuckoo is a good representation of our pretended connoisseurs, who, not having the capacity to judge of works of art or taste, expose themselves to ridicule when they assume the critic, and appear equally impertinent both in their censure and their praise."

Of the author's claim to originality the fable of the Trooper may be taken as a specimen. "As a trooper was dressing his horse, he noticed that one of the shoe-nails had dropped out; yet he postponed for the present sticking in another nail. Soon after, he was summoned by sound of trumpet to join his corps, who were commanded to advance rapidly and charge the enemy. In the heat of the action the loose shoe fell off; his horse became lame, stumbled, and threw his rider to the ground, who was immediately slain by the enemy. A well-known proverb warns us never to leave that to be done to-morrow, which may be done to-day; but the foregoing apologue shows that even an hour's delay of a business seemingly trivial, occasioned death." How much better this is told by Dr. Franklin. "For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy, all for want of care about a horse-shoe nail." Nor is the language helped much by the pencil: the horse is falling on its knees, and the rider tumbles off behind, instead of plunging forward as the action of the horse requires. Of these fables the author says, — "It may be expected that I should say something respecting my motives for the present undertaking.

I have only to observe, that a chief inducement in making the collection was the amusement and employment it afforded me, in the way of my profession as a painter, in sketching designs for each fable. I am, therefore, the less anxious about what may be said by critics on the literary part of the work. They will quickly perceive it has been gathered from various sources: the greater portion are of my own invention." Those which he claimed as his own are marked with his initials, or his name in full. The work was well received, and went speedily to a second edition. All that Hazlitt says about his share in the volume is this:—"I went to Northcote in the evening, to consult about his Fables."

The fame which the Fables brought, encouraged him to announce "Titian and his Times;" a work which raised high expectations. That nobody but an artist could write the life of one, was an old maxim of his—but this he seems now to have abandoned. He employed Hazlitt on this new speculation. Now, though Hazlitt had in early life made an attempt at painting, the productions of his pencil were, by universal admission, the lowest of the low: Northcote, therefore, could not be of opinion that a painter held the pen. He probably believed all was so secret, that the world would never know who the master spirit was that presided over the work: even the controversy about the "Conversations" served to conceal the true author; and when "Titian and his Times" appeared, the critics praised the vigorous mind and ready hand of one fourscore years old and odd, and

his brethren in art talked of the genius of Northcote, which flashed but the stronger the more his body failed.

On looking into the work, it appears the composition of one who knew Italy more from report than inspection; and whose opinions and remarks are in general picked out of the current stock which circulates in the world. The author is not only bold and free regarding the merits of the illustrious artists of the land, but perilously rash in his assertions about the merits of some of the eminent writers of Italy. This was too much for one whose education never reached the extent of his native Grammar; and who knew as little about the great modern poets and writers of Italy, in their native tongue, as he knew of Homer and Virgil in theirs. The work, too, has a flow of language quite different from the dry-as-dust style in which the *Life of Reynolds* is written. I am inclined, however, to ascribe the choice of the subject to *Northcote*: Titian lived to a great age, painted portrait and history, excelled in colouring, and loved to appear in a green velvet cap ornamented with gold. Northcote lived to a great age, painted portrait and history, imagined that he imitated Titian in colouring, and loved to sit in a green velvet cap, like the illustrious Venetian. "I found him one day," says Hazlitt, "painting a portrait of himself. Another stood on an easel. He asked me which I thought most like: I said, 'The one you are about is the best, but not good enough. It looks like a physician, or a member of parliament; but it ought to look like something more—a cardinal, or a Spanish inquisitor.' While I spoke, I

was constantly in danger of oversetting a stand with a small looking-glass, which Northcote particularly cautioned me not to touch. Every now and then he was prying into the glass by stealth, to see if the portrait was like. He had on a green velvet cap, and looked very like Titian."

In a work written by the hand of another, it is difficult to pick out passages bearing the impress of the person who furnished the rough materials, and supplied such remarks as the subject naturally called forth. The following passage owes little, perhaps, to Hazlitt: — "I will in this place venture to give my opinion, that there is no way so improving to a student as to finish his pictures to the utmost minuteness in his power; by which means he will acquire a thorough knowledge of the exact forms and characters of the parts. If he has a genius for the art, he will soon discover what he may treat slightly, or leave out of his work; and if he has none, he will be enabled by this method to give such an air of truth to his productions as will pass for merit with a large part of the community, by which he will be secure of employment, and will also have a certain claim to respect."

There is much truth in the accusation which Northcote brings against Britain, for want of a true feeling in what is noble and imaginative in art. — "Except in the department of portraiture, the art of painting in England has been obstructed or disregarded, unless during some happier intervals when the goddess of taste has paid a short visit to the great. Otherwise art has been in small estimation, except the artist

was foreign. In Italy, even every province contends for the precedence of its own school against that of all the others ; whilst the Englishman is pleased with every thing that is not the production of England. Our neighbours, the French, have spoken contemptuously of us without reserve ; and the few English who have undisputedly excelled, were scarcely rewarded with the honest and impartial approbation of their own countrymen." I perceive the mind and taste of Northcote impressed on many passages in these volumes : — " The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

Northcote, amid these literary toils, did not wholly forsake his easel : his chief labours were in portraiture. In the last fifteen years of his life, he painted some sixty heads : of which one of the most remarkable was a portrait of Sir Walter Scott, for Sir William Knighton. The painter said he had a threefold spell upon him while the poet sat : first, he had the highest admiration of the illustrious author of *Waverley* ; secondly, he loved Sir William Knighton as a true friend and an ardent Devonian ; thirdly, he had his own name and fame to look to : and worked, therefore, as he imagined, under a sort of triple inspiration. He might have learnt, however, from the great master of song who sat to him, that feelings such as these are more likely to impede than inspire : the ancient minstrel, before the lovely and the far descended, felt that

" His hand had lost that sprightly ease
Which marks security to please ; "

and it has been averred that something of this timidity is visible in the picture of Sir Walter. The conception is nevertheless good; to secure the appearance of life and reality, or to unite his own name more effectually with that of Scott, the artist put on his Titian cap of velvet, and represented himself in his painting-room, palette in hand, putting the finishing touch to the head of the poet. The likenesses are both good; and Northcote was so pleased with his success, that he commenced making a copy with some alterations.

Concerning Scott, the painter confided his opinions to Hazlitt. "Sir Walter," said he, "would have stood his ground in any company; neither Burke, nor Johnson, nor any of their admirers, would have been disposed or able to set aside his pretensions. These men were not looked upon in their day as at present. I liked Sir Walter, because he had an easy, unaffected manner, and was ready to converse on all subjects. If, on the contrary, he had been stiff and pedantic, I should, perhaps, have been inclined to think less highly of the author, from not liking the man. We can never judge fairly of men's abilities, till we are no longer liable to come in contact with their persons. I was much pleased with him, and I believe he expressed a favourable opinion of me. I said to him, — 'I admire the way in which you begin your novels; you set out so abruptly, that you quite surprise me; I can't at all tell what's coming.' — 'No,' says Sir Walter, 'nor I neither.' I then told him, that when I first read *Waverley*, I said it was no novel; nobody could invent like

that ; either he had heard the story related by one of the surviving parties, or he had found the materials in a manuscript concealed in some old chest. To which he replied,—‘ You’re not so far out of the way in thinking so.’ You don’t know Scott, do you ? He’d be a pattern to you ; you would learn to rub off some of your asperities ; but you admire him, I believe.” — “ Yes,” answered Hazlitt, “ on this side of idolatry and Toryism : there are two things I admire in Sir Walter, — his capacity and his simplicity. When he was in Paris, and went to Galignani’s, he sat down in an outer room to look at some book he wanted to see : none of the clerks had the least suspicion who it was ; when it was found out, the place was in commotion. Cooper, the American, was in Paris at the time ; his looks and manner seemed to announce a much greater man ; he strutted through the streets with a consequential air, as if he never relaxed in the assumption, nor wished it to be forgotten by others, that he was the American Sir Walter Scott : the real one never troubled himself about the matter.”

At the last sitting which the poet gave the painter, the conversation turned on the numerous portraits of the novelist. “ You have often sat for your portrait,” said Northcote. “ Yes,” said Sir Walter, “ my dog Maida and I have sat frequently, — so often, that Maida, who had little philosophy, conceived such a dislike to painters, that whenever she saw a man take out a pencil and paper, and look at her, she set up a howl, and ran off to the Eildon Hill : her unfortunate

master, however well he can howl, was never able to run much ; he was, therefore, obliged to abide the event : yes, I have frequently sat for my picture."

Anecdotes of Northcote and his sitters are numerous. At the time when the young Roscius passed for a Garrick and a Kemble in one, and nightly witnessed "the slope of wet faces from the pit to the roof," he sat to our painter. That no honour might be wanting, he was conveyed by the Duke of Clarence, now William IV., to Argyll Place, in his own carriage, where lords and ladies not a few, usually assembled to see the progress of the work. The painter himself was, probably, to his Royal Highness, not the least object of curiosity. "The loose gown," says one of his biographers, "in which he painted, was principally composed of shreds and patches, and might, perchance, be half a century old ; his white hair was sparingly bestowed on each side, and his cranium was entirely bald. The royal visiter, standing behind him whilst he painted, first gently lifted, or rather twitched, the collar of the gown ; which Northcote resented by suddenly turning, and expressing his displeasure by a frown ; on which his Royal Highness, touching the professor's grey locks, said, — "You don't devote much time to the toilette, I perceive." The painter instantly replied, — "Sir, I never allow any one to take personal liberties with me : you are the first who ever presumed to do so ; and I beg your Royal Highness to recollect that I am in my own house." The artist resumed his painting ; the prince stood silent for a minute or so, then opened

the door and went away. The royal carriage, however, had not arrived, and rain was falling; the prince returned, borrowed an umbrella, and departed. "Dear Mr. Northcote," said one of the ladies, "I fear you have offended his Royal Highness."—"Madam," said the painter, "I am the offended party." The next day, about noon, Mr. Northcote was alone, when a gentle tap was heard, the studio door opened, and in walked the prince. "Mr. Northcote," he said, "I am come to return your sister's umbrella: I brought it myself, that I might have an opportunity of saying that yesterday I thoughtlessly took an unbecoming liberty with you, which you properly resented. I really am angry with myself, and hope you will forgive me, and think no more of it."—"And what did you say?" enquired a friend to whom the painter told the story. "Say!—good God! what could I say? I only bowed,—he might see what I felt. I could, at that moment, have sacrificed my life for him;—such a prince is worthy to be a king." The prince afterwards, in his maritime way, said "He's a damned honest, independent, little old fellow."

Northcote painted Whitbread, and on that occasion made what he often called a lucky escape. A share in the theatre, when old Drury had arisen out of her dust and ashes, was considered a safe and even lucrative thing. This was proposed to our artist accordingly; but he, in a somewhat snappish discussion, refused to become one of the proprietary. "No," said he, years afterwards, "I was not to be fooled in that way. What! squander upon mock kings and queens—upon

Punch—the pittance which I had saved during the labour of a long life, to keep my sister and myself from starving in our old age! No, no,” he added, in his own shrewd style: “no — this is the penalty of holding conversations, and being on familiar terms, with great people. An artist may honour them as patrons: but to imagine that he can hold communion with them, on a footing of friendship, is a moral misdemeanor, for which he ought to be soundly whipped.”

In the year 1830, Northcote gave up both his pencil and his pen; and composed himself quietly for that dissolution, which he now felt could not be far distant. He complained that life lingered about his body too long, and said it was like keeping the lamps lighted in a church after the congregation had left it. He prepared his will: and of his numerous friends few were forgotten. To a female domestic who had served him faithfully, he gave a thousand pounds, though she had long left him. To insure the publication of a second volume of his Fables, he left three thousand pounds; and for a monument to himself he bequeathed a thousand, with instructions that it should be executed by Chantrey, with whom he had always lived on friendly terms. He now thought he had done his duty, and wished for repose; but repose was denied him. The Conversations, which had vexed him for two years in their magazine shape, were announced to be printed in a volume. This brought a letter of remonstrance from the anxious Rosdew, and a threat to publish the correspondence which had passed on the subject between the painter and Campbell.

"It is my most earnest wish and desire," said Northcote, "that you will make public my letter to Mr. Campbell; as that would, in some degree, explain the truth, and check the progress of those *cursed* papers, which have cost me so many hours of agony, and which I have not been able to suppress with all my endeavours. I wish you had lent me your assistance sooner: it might have been of use." This letter is dated July 21. 1830. The Conversations made their appearance in a collected form; but the passages which reflected on Dr. Zachary Mudge were softened or omitted. The death-bed sickness of Hazlitt was, perhaps, no obstacle in the way of these amputations. He had been ailing for some time, and suffering both from ill health and want: he was in extreme distress: his only son, though possessed of talent, was too young to aid him; and Northcote, who had abundance, seems to have shut his heart. The painter had put him down for an hundred pounds in his will: Hazlitt died on the 18th of September, and the money — a paltry sum, surely, for one who had rendered so much assistance — was bequeathed elsewhere. With Hazlitt, we may say the voice ceased, which had for years principally kept the world in mind of Northcote's existence. The latter had prayed to be delivered from his friend; but now when death sundered them, it is likely that he felt the loss of one whose ready wit and lively conversation gave wings to many an otherwise heavy hour.

Northcote lived till the 13th day of July, 1831, and then died, so calmly, that he seemed to sleep

life away. He was buried in the vault under the new church of St. Mary-le-bone.

“ ‘ Talking with the painter,’ said Hazlitt, ‘ is like conversing with the dead. You see a little old man, eighty years of age, pale and fragile, with eyes gleaming like the lights hung in tombs. He seems little better than a ghost, and hangs wavering and trembling on the very edge of life. You would think a breath would blow him away, and yet what fine things he says.’— ‘ Yes ! ’ observed some one, ‘ and what ill-natured things ; they are malicious to the last word. He is a bottle of aquafortis, which corrodes every thing it touches.’— ‘ Except gold,’ said Hazlitt ; ‘ he never drops upon Sir Joshua or the great masters.’— ‘ Well ; but is he not flowing over,’ persisted the other, ‘ with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness ? He is as spiteful as a woman ; and then his niggardness. Did he ever give any thing ?’— ‘ Yes ; his advice,’ said Hazlitt ; ‘ and very unpleasant it is.’” This is the picture of an ungracious sort of man ; and yet our painter was not without his mild and gentle moments ; nay, he had them frequently. He was pleased to talk with ladies, yet he never was in love ; he considered them as wasters of time and of money. He was abstemious by nature : he had to carry on no warfare with passions wild and strong : he had, by rote, all the old saws which make frugality a virtue ; and love of saving, and of long life, united to persuade him that one half of mankind die in youth from intemperance. This he not only believed himself, but his maiden sister believed in it also ; and as the latter had

the furnishing of the table, she spread it so sparingly, that visitors who accidentally dropped in at meal-time marvelled how they survived such continued self-denial. He was mean in his apparel: his house seemed the abode of a sloven or a niggard; and in his conversation he hovered between the satirist and the miser.

The Prince of Wales, when a young man, met the painter, and was much pleased with his conversation. "What do you know of his Royal Highness?" enquired Sir Joshua. "Nothing," answered Northcote. "Nothing, sir! why, he says, he knows you very well." — "Pooh!" said Northcote, "that is only his brag." The president smiled and muttered, — "Bravely said, bravely said."

He prided himself on his foresight; and it was one of his maxims to leave little to chance and less to friendship. He committed as much of his fame as he could to the durability of marble, and the genius of Chantrey; but he resolved to trust no one with his life and character; and towards the close of his days wrote a copious memoir of himself, and put it into the hands of a friend, with a formal request that he would see it published after his death. He bore in mind how little either Burke or Boswell had fulfilled the hopes of Reynolds, when he left them legacies and pictures; and probably thought, in writing his own life, he carried economy farther than ever his great master had contemplated. Northcote, nevertheless, was, least of all men, to be trusted with such a work. He seldom made a calm estimate or took a dispassionate view of

any thing ; he dipped all subjects, save his historical pictures, in the light of heaven, or the darkness of hell ; with him, in the morning a man was all that was good and great ; in the afternoon he was a cheat and a swindler. His opinion of himself was, perhaps, not liable to such fluctuations ; but the man who cannot make a fair estimate of the merits of others cannot be expected to be just to his own. His life was an almost continued aggression against mankind — artists in particular : his conversation was a controversy, sometimes mild and tolerant, but often violent and rancorous ; and all that he said, and perhaps much that he wrote, required to be taken with some abatement.

Of his system of study, and habits as an artist, a little may be said. He was an early riser ; remained long at his easel ; sought models in all things to aid his conception ; and was long in pleasing himself with his outline or his colours. He attained all by a slow, protracted, and laborious process. He seemed never to see clearly what he desired to do ; and worked more from artificial rules than from the fulness and energy of nature. When he commenced an historical picture, it was his practice to crowd his studio with all manner of costumes, and weapons, and matters which belonged to the era he wished to illustrate. These he painted in brightly enough ; but the human character and sentiment which had to give life and feeling to the whole, could not be found without outlay of imagination ; and Northcote complained that he could neither find in life or fancy such heads as he desired. He liked to

have friends beside him when he painted. Work never interrupted the flow of conversation; he could talk and paint, argue and paint, criticise and paint: with him, in fact, painting was much of a mechanical process.

Northcote's uninspired industry has added nothing, which promises to last, to our stock of literature. An essay, in which he illustrates, with some ingenuity, the untenable position of Barry, that poetry is only true when it can be painted, he considered, he told me, the cleverest thing he had ever written. He was not one of those who believed, with Spenser,

" That poets' wit surpasseth painters' far,
In picturing the parts of beauty daynt."

Of his merits as a painter, I have already said much in the course of my narrative. His chief excellence lay in a certain dignity with which he invested his compositions. He desired to exalt all he touched; and this is true of his portraits, as well as of his historical pieces. The clear manner in which he makes his canvass tell his story is another merit of a high order; this made the pictures he painted for the Shakspeare Gallery more popular than the more imaginative works of Fuseli. His chief faults were defective drawing, dull colouring, and that want of pictorial conception which gives to his works the appearance of having come bit by bit, and with reluctance, from his mind. In his best works there is little to surprise, elevate, or electrify.

BEAUMONT.

WHEN Voltaire called on Congreve, he addressed him as a dramatist of wit and imagination. "I am not an author, sir," said the retired poet; "I am a gentleman."—"Sir," replied the sarcastic Frenchman, "had you been but a gentleman, I should not have visited you." The weakness thus rebuked is a general one, but not universal; and among the exceptions I know few more brilliant than the person of whose life and talents I am now about to write; he adorned the gentleman with the artist, and the artist with the gentleman, and stood high in the ranks both of genius and courtesy.

Sir George Howland Beaumont, Baronet, was born on the 6th of November, 1753; his father died whilst he was yet a child, and left him to the care of his mother, a lady of taste and talent. Her maiden name was Rachel Howland: some property it seems came into the family through the marriage, as her son took her name; but no alliance could add to the dignity of his paternal descent. Among his ancestors he could point to Bohemond Prince of Antioch, son of Robert Guiscard, who shook the throne of the Emperor of Constantinople



JOHN BEAUMONT, F.R.S.

A. 1. 1800.

G. Beaumont

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in the battles of Durazzo and Larissa, and afterwards planted, with Godfrey of Bouillon, the Cross of the Franks on the walls of Jerusalem. This high descent connects the house of Beaumont with the royal families of France and England. His lineage has other claims to our attention; and to this Wordsworth alludes, when, in the dedication of his poems to Sir George, he says, — “Several of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious poets of your name and family who were born in that neighbourhood, and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace-Dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood.” In one of his Coleorton inscriptions the poet speaks still more plainly: —

“ Here may some painter sit in future days,
Some future poet meditate his lays;
Not mindless of that distant age renown'd,
When inspiration hover'd o'er this ground —
The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth Field,
And of that famous youth full soon removed
From earth; perhaps by Shakspeare's self approved,
Fletcher's associate, Jonson's friend beloved.”

He unites name, birth, and residence, in another poem.

“ There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport — an eager child;

“ There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,
Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks,
Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams.”

Sir George was educated at Eton ; where to classic knowledge he united the art of drawing : a book containing his boyish attempts is still extant. He made himself familiar with Greek and Roman lore, and with English dramatic poetry. Indeed, he grew so fond of Shakspeare, that he committed some whole plays to memory ; and occasionally showed, on the boards of a private theatre, that he could represent, as well as understand and feel, the wit and passion of his favourite. He excelled so much in the personation of various characters, serious as well as gay, that friends were not wanting who thought he more than approached Garrick. His mother, observed the progress of her son in learning and taste with no little pleasure ; her powers of mind were such, that she could direct as well as appreciate his studies ; and she lived to see him at the head, not of fashion, but of taste, and acknowledged not only a fine judge, but a skilful master in the art of painting. Another person of equal merit was admitted to a share of his confidence and his pursuits. One evening, while Sir George was acting in private theatricals at North Aston, he observed a young lady of great beauty amongst the auditors, who seemed much moved with the performance : on enquiring, he found that she was Margaret Willis, grand-daughter of Lord Chief Justice Willis, and resided with her father at Altrop. On being introduced to her, he found

that her taste in all things nearly resembled his own; that she was a lover of painting, a greater lover of poetry: and that her taste was naturally excellent, and improved by an education at once elegant and pious. He married her in the year 1784; and an intercourse of forty years and upwards only served to prove how worthy she was of his love. The portraits of the bride and bridegroom were painted by their friend Sir Joshua Reynolds. Sir George has the look of an accomplished gentleman; his lady unites sense to loveliness.

Soon after his marriage, he made with Lady Beaumont the tour of Italy. It was during this journey that he became a painter. He had formerly made drawings to fill up those hours of leisure which the opulent have at their disposal; having done what he wished them to do, they were thrown aside and forgotten. In the land of painters he resumed the pencil, made studies of scenes from nature, and from Claude and the chief masters of the calling. On finding his hand and eye improving by practice, and the poetic spirit of the scene becoming more and more visible in his attempts, he persisted till he had painted a landscape, in which, it is said, something both of Italy and England appeared.*

Of Wilson, who died in 1782, Sir George was

* According to another account Sir George had painted scenes both from the field and from the gallery before his visit to Italy; it is certain, that from his youth up, he was well known to the first artists of the age, for taste, if not for skill; and that he loved to be in their company, and to talk of the art which they professed.

a great admirer; his admiration, however, was not of the blind sort; he felt his extraordinary merits, but perceived his defects. "I think it will be allowed," he thus writes to a friend, "that the pictures on which Wilson's high reputation is founded are not very numerous; whatever may have been the cause, it is certain he did not long possess that vigour of mind and hand which characterises the Niobe. To the last, indeed, and in the weakest of his productions, a fine taste for lines and a classical feeling is discoverable, which must for ever give them a value in the opinions of those who are capable of relishing beauties of this kind. For my own part, I have no hesitation, as far as my own judgment goes, to place him at the head of the landscape-painters of this country. His sole rival is Gainsborough: and if it be allowed, as I think it must, that he had a finer and higher relish for colour, or, in the technical term, a better painter's eye, than Wilson; on the other hand, Wilson was far his superior in elevation of thought and dignity of composition. Both were poets; and, to me, *The Bard of Gray*, and his *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, are so descriptive of their different lines, that I should certainly have commissioned Wilson to paint a subject from the first, and Gainsborough one from the latter: and if I am correct in this opinion, the superior popularity of Gainsborough cannot surprise us; since, for one person capable of relishing the sublime, there are thousands who admire the rural and the beautiful, especially when set off by such fascinating spirit and

splendour of colour as we see in the best works of Gainsborough."

"That Wilson," continues Sir George, "had great faults, must be granted: his subjects are sometimes meagre, as in the "Ceyx;" and sometimes too artificial, and decidedly *composition*; and in producing what he called hollowness, or space, he frequently divided the distances, so that they had too much the appearance of cut scenery at the theatre. His pencil, although feeble and negligent in his decline, is, in his best works, firm, bold, and decisive. I do not conceive his colouring to be his prime excellence; yet it is frequently sweet and airy, solemn and grand, as the subject required, and seldom or never out of harmony."

On his return from abroad, Sir George spoke with much freedom of the excellences and defects of the great masters of Flanders and Italy: this was reckoned heresy by some of the English painters; and by none more than by Reynolds, who was never willing to see any thing but perfection in the conceptions of Michael Angelo and the colouring of Titian. It is true that Beaumont was not a professor of the science and mystery of art; he belonged to no school of painting, and was not, therefore, interested in maintaining the infallibility of any master at home or abroad; but it is also true that his fine education, and dignity of mind, raised him above all such prejudices of judgment, and made him one of the truest critics on art of his time.

He now began to be talked of as a landscape-painter; as one who delighted in classic beauty

of design, and to the clear air and sunshine of Claude desired to unite a certain poetic loftiness of conception, such as was to be found in the best pieces of Wilson. That he had talent for all this, no one who knew him doubted; but wealth stood in the way to fame. Many noble spirits have been depressed by poverty; but ease and opulence have been not less injurious to others, and not a few have been content to enjoy the company of the heirs of fame, who, if they had been forced to "lead laborious days," might have earned places in the first ranks for themselves.

Sir George, in his conversations and letters, generally introduced something about the art he loved; and even in the shortest note he would slip in an anecdote, personal or professional, of Wilson, of Claude, of Reynolds, or Gainsborough: "My friend, Sir Joshua," he thus writes to one of the brethren, "was full as warm in his admiration of Claude as myself; yet I am convinced, from his back-grounds, and a few essays, that, had he practised himself, his mode of composition would have been very different, though I verily believe he would have been one of the finest landscape-painters that ever existed. As to Wilson, he was such an enthusiast, that he would not suffer Claude to be criticised in any degree. I remember receiving a reprimand from him for finding fault with his favourite, though I qualified my observation by saying, what I really thought, that Wilson was a much better painter himself. 'I'll tell you what,' said he, 'all I know of the matter I learnt from Claude, who is the only person that

ever could paint fine weather and Italian skies ; and if you will study him, and get acquainted with him, you will be of the same opinion. There is one picture of his ' (and I think he named 'The Doria Claude' with the temple) 'which makes my heart ache ; I shall never paint such a picture as that, were I to live a thousand years.' Wilson's opinion of Claude's figures was, that they were almost always elegantly conceived, being frequently taken from the antique, sometimes very well drawn, and always well coloured and in their proper places. I think his etchings are not to be ranked with his pictures : but why should my opinion of Claude affect your principles or practice ; the field of art is immense, and there is ample space for talents to exert themselves in every direction ; it is impossible—and I think we should rejoice that is so—to confine genius to one system, however excellent it may be."

Though his chief pleasure lay in painting, and in the company of such men as Reynolds, Gainsborough, and West ; and his journeys were, generally, little farther than from London to Coleorton, and from Coleorton back to London ; he was not insensible to the charms of other society and other scenes. The image of liberty which the French revolutionists of 1790 commanded all nations to fall down and worship, allured him over to France, and he walked, with the carelessness of an Englishman, about the streets of Paris, taking a look now at a gallery of pictures, now at the National Assembly, or the Jacobin Club, of which his acquaintance, David, the painter, was a too active member. While Sir George was one day

walking with Lord Beverley, the "sovereign people" came forth and seized a victim, whom they hurried off to execute *à la lanterne*: the two Englishmen, having never seen before such proceedings gazed on the victim with looks of astonishment and horror: but looks were understood as well as words and deeds by the friends of liberty; and Sir George and his companion were in a fair way of being hanged as unceremoniously as the man they pitied, when a sympathising citizen fixed a tricoloured cockade in their hats, and aided their escape. Sir George loved liberty, but not such liberty as this: he set a guard upon his looks, and took the first opportunity of returning to his native land. I have not heard that he profited as a painter by his brief journey.

As soon as he learned to paint, Sir George began to form a collection of the drawings of Wilson, Gilpin, Hearne, Girtin, Dance, and others. A gallery of fine paintings required more expense: besides, the war with France shut us out from the great Italian collections, and an Englishman ran the double chance of paying an enormous price, and obtaining a spurious article: the knowledge and perseverance of Sir George enabled him, however, to overcome or avoid all these difficulties. He was aware of the frauds of the picture dealers, who keep on hand ready-made Claudes, Poussins, and Cuyps, for all lovers of landscape, some of which are copied with a skill, and smoked into a look of other times, that may deceive the wisest. The fruit of many years' research was one Poussin, four Claudes, one Canaletti, one Rubens, and two Rembrandts; but

then they were all of first-rate excellence. To these he added two Wilsons, one Reynolds, one West, and one Wilkie. He loved to gaze on them by the hour; and to show their beauties to all lovers of art. He did not collect them, as a miser, to hide them from the world, and doat on them in the dark. So far did he carry his admiration of Claude, that it amounted almost to a passion: the "Narcissus," by that great master, he commonly carried with him, like a household god, when he went to Coleorton, and brought it back to its place when winter recalled him to London. He resolved, too, not to trust his treasures to the uncertain taste of the future heirs of his line: he had long privately resolved to leave them to the nation; but even this he was unwilling to do, unless he could ensure them a safe and honoured sanctuary. This required time and well-used opportunity to bring about: he never lost sight of it, however, and lived to see it accomplished.

No one knew better than Sir George, the influence which fine collections of works of genius exercise over the taste of the community at large, as well as the progress of students in art. To this we owe his unwearied solicitude about the founding of a national gallery, and his desire that a complete collection of the works of Reynolds should be exhibited to the country. "It was with Sir George," says one of his relatives, "that the idea of exhibiting Sir Joshua's pictures originated: in this he was warmly aided by Lord Melville, and encouraged by King George IV. It is right to name those who exerted themselves

in the cause of art; by exertion, I do not mean a cold approbation, and a diplomatic sort of encouragement, such as wellbred courtesy bestows, but I mean that enthusiastic exertion which is directed by an ardent heart and a good taste, and is not easily daunted by the well-bred incivilities of indifference. No one knew better than Sir George, who were the hollow advocates of art, and who were the sincere ones; and it was pleasant to hear him, in his dry ironical way, discourse of the pretended patrons of sculpture and painting. His fine education and good breeding enabled him to draw the portraits of those false Duessas with the nicest delicacy, but he did this without any ill-nature, and more in sorrow than in resentment. He sometimes did not spare artists themselves, whose little jealousies and party bickerings he held injurious to the dignity of art, and to the title of gentlemen."

He loved to keep up, but adorn, the old state of the Beaumonts; though his house in Grosvenor Square was like other dwellings outwardly, the interior was, in fact, a rich museum of books and paintings. Every where his good taste and good sense were visible: he had no collections of shells, and spars, and chips of curious stones, and specimens of red and blue clay, bits of bone, and cracked porringers, and other matters, old and filthy, and far-fetched: his walls were covered with the works of Wilson, and Claude, and Reynolds; among them were one or two of his own landscapes, in which critics and artists perceived much that was ima-

gative and picturesque. There were others, whose admiration of the works of Sir George was neither warm nor high; who, nevertheless, acknowledged the presence of taste and skill in his productions: and there were visitors of literary name, whom the liking of Lady Beaumont for whatever was poetic attracted to her side; she was seldom without the company of authors of eminence.

When autumn called Sir George into the country, he found out an employment which required patience as well as taste. About the year 1800, he dipt his hands in mortar, and never had them wholly clean for the rest of his life. Having resolved to rebuild Coleorton Hall, in Leicestershire, he called in the aid of Dance, the architect; but in laying out the lawns, and beautifying the grounds, he trusted to his own skill in landscape; and it must be owned that he embellished nature, and added a new charm to the groves, the fountains, and the hills. When Beaumont planted a tree on a favourite spot, Wordsworth was ready to record the circumstance in verse; and when he raised an altar by wood or dale, the poet signalised it in song. There were, however, other, and better, points in his Coleorton landscape than trees and altars: the happiness of his people, and the condition of their cots and villages, got as much of his attention as his new hall, or its surrounding scenery. It was his pleasure to be acquainted with all who lived under his protection: and comfortable homes, and happy tenants, spoke of a wise as well as an indulgent master.

When the Continent at length grew calm, after the storms of Leipsic and Waterloo, swarms of our artists hurried to visit foreign galleries, so long excluded from their view. Among these was Sir George Beaumont. He went to Switzerland in 1819, and to Italy in 1822. For what he did there we have his own words.—“I have made,” he thus wrote to his friend Chantrey, “two purchases since I have been at Rome: one is a bas-relief by Michael Angelo; the subject a ‘Virgin,’ a ‘St. John,’ and an ‘Infant Christ.’ St. John is presenting a dove to the child Jesus, who shrinks from it, and shelters himself in the arms of his mother, who seems gently reproving St. John for his hastiness, and putting him back with her hand. The child is finished, and the mother in great part: the St. John is only sketched, but in a most masterly style. The proofs of its authenticity, exclusive of its merit, are incontestible: Canova, with his usual kindness, superintended the packing; it is directed, through the Custom House, to Grosvenor Square; and I wish it not to be seen by any one till my return, unless you yourself are sufficiently interested in it to open it and look at it. The other case contains a work of certainly a very different calibre, yet I think interesting, and of considerable merit in its way. It is a view of the Colonna Gallery, with all the pictures which were hanging in it at the time it was painted, by P. Panini, for the Cardinal Colonna. Panini, although not to be trusted out of doors, painted interiors with great skill; as the two pictures at Lord Abercorn’s at the Priory, of St. Peter’s and St. Paul’s, bear witness.

This, Canova tells me, was always considered his masterpiece: at any rate, it is a very amusing picture, and many of the copies very good, particularly the 'Velasquez,' now at Lord Grosvenor's. We are delighted here: the weather is beautiful; such as we dream of when we dream of other worlds." Of the Michael Angelo group, Sir George says to Chantrey, in another letter,— "One would almost imagine Sir Joshua had seen it: the child has much of that transient grace so common to children, the hitting of which he calls shooting flying." There is a resemblance between that in marble and the "Holy Family" of Reynolds, too close to be accidental: the postures of the St. John and the Infant Jesus in both are nearly similar. "I had always," says Sir George, "a veneration for Michael Angelo; but this visit has raised him still higher in my opinion: I used to think Sir Joshua's comparison of him to Homer, and Raphael to Virgil, a little too strong; but now I am, to say the least, in doubt. At any rate, he is himself alone." In the same letter, Sir George records his opinion of another artist. "I have given," he says, "a commission to Gibson: he seems to me to have great merit; and his composition, I think, will please you: he is modest and assiduous, with much taste; and, I think, will do us great credit." The group from the chisel of Gibson was sent to Coleorton Hall: the Michael Angelo marble was presented to the Royal Academy.

One of the objects which Sir George had most at heart, was, the establishment of a national gallery for paintings. From the year 1818 to 1824,

he held many conversations with men of taste and influence on the subject, and more particularly with the Hon. George Agar Ellis, now Lord Dover, — who concurred in its expediency, and urged it publicly in the House of Commons, and privately to the ministers, especially Lord Liverpool. “Assure the Government,” said Sir George, “that I will give my own pictures to the nation, as soon as there is a proper place allotted for their reception.” This splendid bribe, no doubt, had due weight : Lord Liverpool listened with a favourable ear to the subject ; approved of a national gallery, as beneficial to art, and worthy of the country ; but shook his head, and hesitated at the expense : the Earl of Aberdeen and Lord Farnborough, were moved to aid in the attempt : much was said, and something promised : still nothing was done. The death of Mr. Angerstein, and the dread that his collection might go to the King of Bavaria, or the Emperor of Russia, or else be locked up at home by some churlish purchaser, quickened the slow, and confirmed the wavering.

When these rumours were afloat, Sir George was not idle. “You have proved yourself,” he thus wrote to Lord Dover, “so sincere a friend to the arts, that I am sure you must have heard the report, that Lord Hertford is in treaty, and likely to purchase Angerstein’s pictures ; but that if he finds the nation will buy them, he will give up his claim. I hope the latter part of the report is true, and that the country will purchase. You manifested such sincere and laudable zeal to bring this about, that I have great hopes you will

carry your point: certainly, I would rather see them in the hands of his Lordship, than have them lost to the country; but I would rather see them in the Museum, than in the possession of any individual, however respectable in rank or taste; because taste is not inherited, and there are few families in which it succeeds for three generations. My idea, therefore, is, that the few examples which remain perfect, can never be so safe as under the guardianship of a body which never dies; and I see every year such proofs of the carelessness with which people suffer these inestimable relics to be rubbed, scraped, and polished as if they were their family plate, that I verily believe, if they do not find some safe asylum, in another half century little more will be left than the bare canvasses."

Such were the pithy words of Sir George Beaumont in November, 1823; he had soon occasion to write with less doubt or despondency: he thus addresses Lord Dover: — "Our friend Knight has informed me that Parliament has resolved upon the purchase of the Angerstein collection; and as I shall always consider the public greatly indebted to your exertions, I hope you will pardon my troubling you with my congratulations. By easy access to such works of art, the public taste must improve, which I think the grand desideratum; for when the time shall come, when bad pictures, or even works of mediocrity, shall be neglected, and excellence never passed over, my opinion is, we shall have fewer painters, and better pictures. I think the public already begin to feel works of art are not merely toys for

connoisseurs, but solid objects of concern to the nation; and those who consider it in the narrowest point of view, will perceive that works of high excellence pay ample interest for the money they cost. My belief is, that the Apollo, the Venus, the Laocoön, &c., are worth thousands a year to the country which possesses them."

That Sir George Beaumont was the main-spring in the establishment of the National Gallery, cannot be denied. Ministers were intimidated by the fierce attacks of the economists, and scarcely dared to propose such a measure themselves; and dreading the apathy of some, and the animosity of others, Lord Dover, says he, would have wanted courage to bring the subject before the Commons, had it not been for the stimulating zeal of Sir George, and the permission which he gave to announce the donation of his own magnificent collection to the country. Lord Dover was warmly aided by Mr. Stuart Wortley, now Lord Wharncliffe, Mr. Alexander Baring, Mr. William Smith of Norwich, and one or two others; the ministers began to pluck up courage: in short, the feeling of the House was in the favour of something being done; and the result was the purchase of Angerstein's collection, and the establishment of a gallery, destined, I will not doubt, to become one of the noblest in the world. Sir George did not long survive this consummation of many an anxious thought: his health for some years had been declining; old age, rather than illness, began to sap his strength, render his steps insecure, and impress that darkening seriousness on his brow,

which indicates the consciousness of approaching death. He ventured to walk out among the scenes which he loved at Coleorton Hall; on his return, he complained of cold, was observed to shiver, and desired to be conducted to bed, from which he never again rose. He died the 7th of February, 1827; aged seventy-four years.

In person, Sir George Beaumont was tall and well-shaped; his hands were elegantly formed; and his aspect was erect and noble. There was great persuasion in his smile; his voice was gentle, and his conversation lively and instructive. Few represented so gracefully the man of birth and talents. He had all the dignity which we assign to the Sidneys and Raleighs of Elizabeth's court, united to the polished elegance of that of George IV. His knowledge was extensive, and sat gracefully on him, like an every-day dress; while his love of literature, and his admiration of the great masters in art, amounted to a passion. Nor could he conceal his liking for the stage, or his respect for its best ornaments. In one of his letters to Lord Dover, he says, — "I believe Shakspeare and Garrick are the only persons who have had it in their power to make it impossible for their admirers to decide whether their tragedy or comedy was most excellent. Garrick is before me at this instant (February, 1824); I see his quick eye, and hear the electric tones of his piercing and rapid utterance. Other actors are men of slow proceedings; but he was like the lightning. It is quite impossible to form an idea of the sensations he conveyed, whether he chilled you with horror, or convulsed you with

laughter. Other actors may be compared to Otway or Rowe; but Garrick alone was Shakespeare." His sympathy was wide and far-reaching; nor did he think, that to speak once to a man of genius in his life, was notice sufficient, Jackson he ever regarded as a friend, and watched his progress in art with much solicitude. "I am rejoiced," he said to Lord Dover, "to hear of the recovery of our friend Jackson, whose life is as good as his works. I have known him from his outset; and I verily believe no human being was ever more free from envy, hatred, malice, and every bad and unkind passion." His generosity was great. He aided largely in bringing forward Jackson: he countenanced Coleridge; and when his hour of adversity came, he stirred himself so that the poet obtained that pension from the Royal Society of Literature which men fondly hoped would last for life. While he lived, genius never solicited him in vain.

Of his skill as a painter, I have heard artists speak both in terms of censure and commendation. Whilst writing this imperfect sketch, I applied to one whom I reckoned equally clever and candid for his opinion; and his evasion of the question I must consider as unfavourable. I have, however, seen many of Beaumont's landscapes; for, as he painted for several hours almost every morning, he produced numbers, some of which he gave to his friends, and others to public galleries; and, if I may venture to speak from my own feelings, I must say there is nothing of common-place in their conception. He

felt the poetry of the scenes which he desired to delineate ; and his notions are all akin to the lofty and the grand. An acre of meadow, a tree in the middle, a cow at its foot, and a crow on the top, was a kind of landscape which he never contemplated. He loved Claude, and imagined that he imitated him. His heart was, however, with Wilson ; if he set up the former for his model, his eye wandered unconsciously to the latter. In his works, there is less of the fine fresh glow of nature than I could wish to see : there are glimpses of grandeur ; indications rather than realities—the dawn, but never the full day. Yet nature had bestowed on him the soul and the eye of a fine landscape-painter ; scenes shone on his fancy, which his hand had not skill to embody : he saw paradise, with angels walking in glory among the trees ; but the vision either passed away, or was dimly outlined on the canvass. Nature had done much for him ; but fortune rendered the gift unavailing. Coleorton Hall, and a good income, hindered him from ranking with the Wilsons, the Turners, and the Callcotts of his day ; the duties of his station, the allurements of polished society,—in short, the want of the armed hand of poverty to thrust him into the ranks of the studious and the toiling—hindered him from acquiring that practical skill of execution, without which imagination and taste are comparatively fruitless. Yet, with all these drawbacks, he has left works which will continue his name for centuries among the lovers of the poetic and the beautiful.

The dignity of his household was well main-

tained after his death by his lady, who in looks and taste so much resembled him, that they seemed akin. She did not long survive her bereavement. Coleorton Hall, with all its fine scenery, has passed into the hands of a kinsman who sustains, I am glad to hear, the old standard of hospitality of the gifted family of Beaumont.

LAWRENCE.

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, principal painter to the King, and president of the Royal Academy, was born on the 4th of May, 1769, in the parish of St. Philip and Jacob, Bristol; within a few doors of the birth-place of Robert Southey, the poet. He was the youngest of sixteen children, most of whom died in infancy. His father,—a Thomas also,—had been educated for the law; but was either so unsteady of purpose, or so unfortunate in choice, that he became successively attorney, poetaster, spouter of odes, actor, revenue officer, farmer and publican, and prospered in none of these callings. The artist's mother, Lucy Read, was distantly related to the house of Powis, and, therefore, of gentle blood;—an honour which Lysons, the antiquarian, would fain have established for the family of her husband also.

The early history of the painter is painfully mingled with the fortunes of his father. One who saw him when young, said he was a handsome child, with large bright eyes, and a voice unusually sweet. His father, at that time landlord of the Black Bear Inn, Devizes, turned his good looks and fine voice to advantage, and taught him the art of spouting select passages from the

poets, for the entertainment of customers. Before he was five years old the child had stood on a table, held out his right arm, and recited to the wondering guests some of the speeches from Milton, and sundry of the odes of Collins. He had luckily done more; he had learned to write; and moreover to draw portraits, which he did with such skill as to likeness, that his father usually introduced him to his visitors with "Gentlemen, here's my son,—will you have him recite from the poets, or take your portraits?"

The recital of odes, and the sketching of likenesses, were matters unfavourable to his education, and injurious to his simplicity of manners. His father, indeed, and it is believed his mother too, instructed him privately in grammar and spelling; he was also sent, at the age of six years, to the school of Jones, near Bristol, and afterwards received lessons from Lewis, a dissenting clergyman, at Devizes: but with all these helps and snatches, his education was superficial and imperfect; he was altogether ignorant of classic lore; and his knowledge of the English poets, much as it has been praised, was really nothing uncommon. He could, however, make his little go far. "The art of repeating poetry in the happiest manner," says Williams, "continued to be one of the most pleasing traits in Sir Thomas's social, or I should say, private conversation; in mixed company he was too unostentatious to use quotations—but in small parties, or talking to his sisters, he was the most apt, succinct, and correct quoter of English verse that could be met with." His voice was sweet and

musical, and he seemed to feel deeply the sentiment of the poetry. It is wonderful, in fact, that Lawrence learned so much, and suffered so little, as he did, in the natural manliness of his character, under the system pursued by his father. All the finer sympathies of the soul are apt to be strained and injured by exposure in early youth to the transient gaze of strangers. That he was not made an utter coxcomb was not the fault of his father.

Others, however, would have been to blame had this happened. Garrick, I am told, was pleased once, during his stay at the Black Bear, to listen complacently while the boy, urged by his father, recited a long passage from Shakespeare: on the great actor's return, within the space of a month, as he alighted, he called out, "Landlord, has Tommy learned any more speeches, eh?" and ordering the boy and his tea to be taken to the summer-house in the garden, said, "Come now, my man, begin;" and when the tea and the spouting were finished, he clapped his head, and said, "Bravely done, Tommy: whether will ye be a painter or a player, eh?" The fame of the wonderful boy of Devizes reached Prince Hoare, a man of taste both in art and literature: he heard him recite Lycidas, and saw some hands and eyes of his drawing, and pronounced the latter beautiful. In the painting of the human eye Lawrence became afterwards unrivalled. Fuseli, who called our best portraits "bits of fine colour," swore passionately that the eyes of Lawrence rivalled those of Titian;—the painter's praise could go no higher. The consequence of all this

notoriety was a portrait of the prodigy at the age of seven years, from the graver of Sherwin. Mrs. Siddons, it is said, added her praise to that of the multitude, and declared that his voice in recitation was harmonious, and his action just.

With admirers came advisers. The Rev. Dr. Kent proposed that a boy of such natural powers should have instructors, and, to open his mind a little, lent him "Rogers's Lives of Foreign Painters." Mr. Lawrence, however, had a notion of his own: "Genius," he said, "must be its own instructor; reading will but lead my boy astray. I have, however, no objections to his studying from the old masters; and for that purpose he may go round and take a look at the neighbouring picture galleries." Corsham House, the seat of the Methuens, had some valuable paintings, and thither was he taken: he was lost during the tour of the apartments, and was found gazing upon a picture by Rubens. "Ah!" he sighed as he was taken away, "I shall never be able to paint like that." When he went home, he endeavoured to imitate what he had seen, and painted "Christ reproving Peter;"—"Reuben's Request that Benjamin might go with his Brethren;"—and "Haman and Mordecai." These works were of course very feeble; but to the great fame which Lawrence already enjoyed we have the published testimony of the Hon. Daines Barrington:—"As I have mentioned so many proofs of early genius in children, I cannot pass unnoticed a Master Lawrence, son of an innkeeper at Devizes, in Wiltshire. This boy is now (February 1780) nearly ten

years and a half old; but at the age of nine, without the least instruction from any one, he was capable of copying historical pictures in a masterly style, and also succeeded amazingly in compositions of his own, particularly that of 'Peter denying Christ.' In about seven minutes he scarcely ever failed of drawing a strong likeness of any person present, which had generally much freedom and grace, if the subject permitted. He is likewise an excellent reader of blank verse, and will immediately convince any one that he both understands and feels the striking passages of Milton and Shakspeare."

When Lawrence was ten years old, or little more, his father removed from Devizes. He had failed in his business, and it occurred to him in his hour of distress that he might derive solid advantage from the talents of his youngest son. He made the first experiment upon Oxford. The boy had not been unnoticed by the chiefs of the University, who stopped at Devizes on their way to Bath; and when he appeared in their city, and announced himself as a portrait painter, many flocked to his easel. "He took the likenesses," says his biographer, "of the most eminent persons then at Oxford; but his pencil was not confined to grave sexagenarians; for many of the younger nobility and gentry were anxious to have their portraits taken by the phenomenon: and the female beauty of this dignified city, and its wealthy neighbourhood, equally pressed upon his talents." Amongst these early patrons were the Bishops of Oxford and Llandaff; the Earls

Bathurst and Warwick; and the Countess of Egremont.

When the Oxford harvest was reaped and gleaned, the Lawrences hastened to Bath and hired a house at the rate of a hundred a year. Here, however, as art was not yet so certain as to be trusted to, lodgers were admitted; the sisters of the young artist were placed at respectable boarding schools, and all was happy and prosperous. Sitters were numerous; and those who, at first, only considered him as a curiosity, began to recognise the presence of real taste and elegance in his pictures. His price, a guinea at first, was soon raised to a guinea and a half: his portrait of Mrs. Siddons, as Zara, was admired and engraved; his fame spread far and wide; Sir Henry Harpur desired to adopt him as his son; and Hoare, the painter, saw something so angelic in his looks, that he proposed to paint him as a Christ. His portraits of those days were graceful fac-similes of his sitters; in course of time he learned how to deal with a difficult face, and evoke beauty and delicacy out of very ordinary materials.

As the exclamation of Garrick was, "Will you be a painter or a player, Tom?" the boy imagined, it seems, that he could be both, and, in the very dawn of his fortune as an artist, applied to a company of actors, at Bath, to be admitted to a trial. His father, who cultivated this vain talent in him, appears to have had little faith in what his son's good looks and graceful recitation could produce: he became alarmed *lest the art histrionic should triumph over the*

art pictorial, and entered into a sort of ill-laid plot, with Bernard, the comedian, to evoke the evil spirit of the sock and buskin wholly out of him. The actor thus relates the plot, and its success, in his "Retrospections:" — "All the parties assembled: old Lawrence, and his friends, in the back parlour; young Lawrence, Mr. Palmer, and myself in the front. The manager was no sooner introduced, than, with great adroitness, he at once demanded a specimen of the young man's abilities, and took his seat at one end of the room. I proposed the opening scene between Pruli and Jaffier. We accordingly commenced, I, Pruli, he, Jaffier: he went on very perfectly till, in the well-known passage, 'To me you owe her,' he came to the lines

'I brought her, gave her to your despairing arms:
Indeed you thank'd me, but ——'

here he stammered, and became stationary. I held the book, but would not assist him; and he recommenced and stopped, reiterated and hemmed, till his father, who had heard him with growing impatience, pushed open the door, and said, 'You play Jaffier, Tom! hang me if they would suffer you to murder a conspirator.' Mr. Palmer, taking young Lawrence by the hand, assured him, in the most friendly manner, that he did not possess those advantages which would render the stage a safe undertaking. The address did not produce an instantaneous effect; it was obvious that the young artist was of a reverse opinion. A conversation ensued, in which I, abusing the life of an actor, and other

friends representing the prospects of a painter, young Lawrence at length became convinced, but remarked, with a sigh, ' That if he had gone on the stage, he might have assisted his family much sooner than by his present employment.' My reader can appreciate the affection of this sentiment, but I am unable to describe its delivery, or the effect it took upon every person present." The filial attachment of Lawrence to his family was, from his earliest days, proverbial amongst his friends and acquaintance.

The general notice which he soon afterwards received, enabled him, perhaps, to look back on his dramatic failure with little regret. He grew in stature, and seemed destined in his person to realise the idea of the sculptor, borrowed from the philosopher of old, that the noblest soul is ever the most splendidly lodged. His boyish style — feeble but pretty — began to make way for one more vigorous and manly; he saw his improving skill, and felt his growing taste, and expressed sometimes not a little surprise at his early success. He did not perceive that it was to the pretty child, and his singular love of drawing, that success was to be attributed; there could be little in his works worthy of such patronage: before wit has grown up to man's estate, and passion and feeling have expanded with our stature, all labours, whether with the pen or the pencil, are necessarily vague and smooth, without sentiment and without character. The prettinesses of pencilling, and the delicacies of manner, of Lawrence, are note-worthy, inasmuch as they show the man in the child; in

these he excelled more when he became eminent, than in grand harmony of colouring and masculine energy of thought.

He had not then learned the art in which he afterwards became a master, of softening down the geometrical lines and manifold points of modern dress into something like elegance: the broad and innumerable buttons; the close-fitted capes; the peaked lapels, and hanging cuffs, and pointed skirts of these, our latter days, are sorely in the way of a young artist who thinks of Michael Angelo and the antique, and dreams of his profession like a poet. Nor were the dresses of the women less extravagant than those of the men; their hair frizzed, and filled with pomatum and powder; a wide hat, and enormous feather stuck on the top of the head; a close cut riding-jacket, wide at the shoulders, and pinched at the waist so tightly, that, with the expanding petticoat and spreading hat, they looked like sand-glasses, and were, assuredly, sad frights, either in life or in painting. In such things the early works of Lawrence abounded — and no wonder, when he dedicated his whole youth to portraiture; and was, therefore, obliged to take sitters as they came, dressed out as fashion or their own fancies dictated. His studio, before he was twelve years old, was the favourite resort of the beauty, and fashion, and taste of Bath: young ladies loved to sit and converse with this handsome prodigy; men of taste and vertu purchased his crayon heads, which he drew in vast numbers, and carried them far and near, even into foreign lands, to show as the

work of the boy-artist of Britain. His father, the public, and his own love of display, all conspired to make him a coxcomb; but his natural good sense, now strengthening every day, and his genius expanding with his growth, carried him safely over those shoals and quicksands on which so many lesser spirits have been shipwrecked.

With his seventeenth year the true fame of Lawrence commences; for then he first dipped his brush in oil colours, and began to free himself from the captivating facilities of crayons. All this was not to be done as soon as wished. He desired to become a great artist, but it was necessary meanwhile to live, and moreover to study the best works; and this he accomplished without abandoning portraiture. He saw that to others the doors of the Academy, and the galleries of painting, were opened wide, while to himself they had been hitherto closed; and that as yet he had learned little, save the common art of copying a face, with a slight leaning towards flattery. Feeling that his own execution was feeble, he looked around him for models of excellence, and laboured hard to profit by them. He copied, first, the style of Rembrandt; then that of Reynolds; and, lastly, he imagined he was imitating Titian. One of those pictures was audacious in subject; of its conception or handling no one has informed us;—this was a Christ bearing the cross, some eight feet high. He never was equal to the solemn grandeur which such a production required; his talents, first and last, lay with the soft, the graceful, and the lovely. He *was more at home* in a portrait of himself of

three quarters size ; it has been described as a wonderful work for one so young, and so unacquainted with colours.

His letters are not the least remarkable of his works at this period of his life. His correspondence was wide, and extended to all ranks. His style of writing was at this time easy: he seemed only desirous of being understood. In one letter to his mother, he speaks of his own attempts with equal complacency and simplicity. " I shall now say what does not proceed from vanity ; nor is it an impulse of the moment ; but what from my judgment I can warrant. Though Mr. Prince Hoare's studies have been great, my paintings are better than any I have seen from his pencil. To any but my own family I certainly should not say this ; but, excepting Sir Joshua, for the painting of a head, I would risk my reputation with any painter in London." This from a youth of seventeen, during the lifetime of such men as Gainsborough, and Romney, and Hoppner, is decided enough ; but he seldom erred in this way ; his letters, like his conversation, overflowed with admiration of other artists. To his brethren he was ever generous and sincere ; and to the world, in general, polite and deferential. He has been accused of having gained less by polish of manners, than he lost in warmth of heart ; but to a similar charge, perhaps, all who mingle largely in society are liable. Man in his youth is candid and enthusiastic ; intercourse with the world gives his ecstasies a sobering ; he grows circumspect and watchful ; a graver joy in all things comes upon

him; yet the natural warmth of his heart is not necessarily cooled;—he only guards its affection with greater discretion.

The fame of Lawrence, up to this moment, had been wholly provincial: he was unknown through his works in London, where no reputations are taken on trust; and he began to thirst for distinction in the great fountain of honour. No doubt, however, even the capital sometimes adopts the dunce for the genius, the presumptuous quack for the man of science. Even associations expressly for encouraging and rewarding genius have not been always able to distinguish the true metal of talent from the flashy counterfeit.* In truth, genius is daring, and thinks and works out of the common way; while mere talent plods on in the style and the forms of others, deals in long established sentiment and graces, and is rewarded by judges of the same calibre of intellect. The honours of the Society of Arts seem for many years to have been preferred to those bestowed by the Academy; and I can impute this to no better cause than that the money which the former bestowed was more acceptable to needy young men than the medals of the latter. Some feeling of this sort probably induced the elder Lawrence to

* Of all the present living members of the Royal Academy, four only were able, in the annual strife for distinction, to carry away the gold medal; nay, some of the most eminent could never reach the silver one. Lawrence, indeed, never contended for the lesser honours of the Royal Academy; it is nevertheless singular that none of the presidents of that body, either dead or living, ever obtained the gold medal.

transmit to the Society of Arts a copy of the Transfiguration on glass, which his son had painted two years before. The merit of the piece was admitted, but nothing could alter in its favour a standing rule, which settled that all works of competition should be made within a year and a day of the time they are sent to the Adelphi. They nevertheless sent him a silver palette gilt, and five guineas; the painter was pleased with the former, his father thought the latter too little for such a performance; but little or large, the Society have never, save once, given a larger sum since; indeed, they have only awarded two money premiums, one of three, the other of twenty guineas: works of real merit are accordingly no longer sent.

Lawrence came to London in 1787, and took handsome apartments in Leicester Fields. The fame of Sir Joshua Reynolds rendered the situation popular, nor had the name of Hogarth ceased to be remembered; that of Lawrence was now added, though at first with but indifferent success. He opened an exhibition of his works, over which his father presided; but the charm which his extreme youth had formerly bestowed was passed and gone, and little was made by the wondrous "boy painter." He was not, however, without resources; having taken Salisbury in his journey to town, his pockets were yet full of the money obtained by crayon portraits there, and having felt his way in London, he resolved to abide where the market was largest, and accordingly brought his mother from Bath, and

united the whole family again. He took a house in Duke Street, St. James's, and removed his studio to Jermyn Street. One of his reasons for coming to London was, that he might study in the Academy; and on the 13th of September, 1787, he took his place as a student; his large bright eyes, his elegant form, his hair long and plentiful flowing down upon his shoulders, and a certain country air which London is long in removing, made many look at him oftener than once. His person, however, was nothing to the beauty of his drawings: he soon made two — "The fighting Gladiator," and "The Apollo of Belvidere," — of such excellence as surpassed all competition. He was satisfied with the result; he contended for no medal, and left the prizes for those who needed such distinction.

Lawrence, who, if he loved the notice of the powerful, coveted the regard of men of genius more, was now desirous of being introduced to Sir Joshua Reynolds; and this pleasure was procured to him by a letter from Hoare. The President was at times sufficiently easy of access; but now and then he was in a stern mood, as men will be when interruptions are frequent, and serious studies are invaded by some pestering popinjay, whom no hint can induce to go. An artist of the hour had called on Sir Joshua to receive his judgment. The President had the dauber's work before him; and his eyebrows were lowering. The student was defending his piece against the remarks of Reynolds; and his pertness was worthy of his dulness. "Well, well! go on, go on!" said Sir Joshua; and turned from him to

Lawrence, who stood with an oil portrait of himself in his hand, painted in 1786. He placed it in a proper light, and looked at it long and attentively. "Now, young man," he said, "I must have some talk with *you*. I suppose you think the sentiment of this is very fine, and the colouring very natural?" Lawrence spoke with modesty. Reynolds fixed his keen eyes on him. "You have been looking at the old masters, I see; but my advice is this:—study nature, study nature." They parted, mutually pleased with each other. I have, however, heard it said, by those who had the means of knowing, that Reynolds, on examining the early female portraits of Lawrence, remarked that they were deficient in the meek and modest composure which belongs to the loftier order of female expression; and hazarded a doubt whether this fault would not adhere to him.

Those who have endeavoured to account for what they call "the early and wonderful success" of Lawrence in London, and for that influence which opened, as it were by magic, the hearts and the houses of the rich and the learned, have imputed it to his graceful manners and pleasing address. They forget that the success of which they speak was not very sudden in its growth; he did not become decidedly popular for several years. He was too prudent and too knowing, young as he was, to appear rashly in oil colours, when such men as Reynolds, Opie, Gainsborough, Hoppner, and West, were in the market; he studied incessantly, acquired gradually a knowledge, and then a mastery in colour; and when, at length,

he thought he might appear with some chance of success, he sent his productions to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, and became a public candidate for fame. The desire of seeing the wonder of Bath no doubt induced many people of rank in town to extend their invitations to Lawrence: when these found that his talents were even superior to his manners, they began to employ him; and some were willing to perceive in him some recompence for the loss of Sir Joshua, whose declining health was now withdrawing him from the service of the public.

Of the manners of the young painter at this period there are many accounts. A lady, who knew him well, informs me, that in all he said or did in company, there was an air of offensive affectation; but that when she met with him in after-life, it was only on her most zealously looking for it that she could find any traces of the original sin. This is probably near the truth. He spent much of his leisure, at this time, in the society of Farington, and Smirke, and Fuseli, and other artists; and it was his pleasure, when conversation flagged, to rise up and recite passages from Milton, which he did with a softness of voice and gentleness of manner, "very much," as Fuseli said, "like Belial, but *deucedly unlike Beelzebub*."

Amid all his success and fine company he had his own vexations. Want of money was then, and continued to be, with Lawrence, the source of much unhappiness. His father embarked in speculations above his capacity and purse, and the deficiencies had to be made good. His money *coming in*, as luck sent customers, each sum was

apt to be looked upon as a windfall, and squandered accordingly ; while, to add to all, he loved to associate with expensive companions, and never, for one moment, carried into effect any one of those schemes of economy which his frequent distresses made him vow. He began the world deeply in debt — his father kept him poor ; and when manhood came, and money poured in as it never before poured on any painter, a third of it was lost in the traffic of accommodation bills ; another portion was lost for want of a well-arranged plan of domestic outlay ; — and, let it never be forgotten, much was swallowed up in matters of charity, for he was at all times eminently generous. His money melted away like snow upon thatch, and dropped through a thousand invisible openings. He often alluded to this circumstance himself, and ingenuously acknowledged that he won much, and, without being a man of expense, spent it all. His poverty in early life is not to be wondered at. He allowed his father and mother three hundred a year, and subscribed a bond in addition for a large sum, part of which he actually paid.

One of his first works in London was “ Homer reciting the Iliad to the Greeks ; ” — a commission from Payne Knight, an accomplished scholar, but who mistook his own knowledge for natural taste and genius. The work was fine in drawing, and had considerable delicacy of colour ; it was however deficient in sentiment : he never had the art of telling a story, or of putting an historical tongue into his pictures. His next work was more *after his natural spirit*, and may be regarded as

the foundation of his fame ; this was the portrait of Miss Farren, afterwards Countess of Derby. She was very beautiful, and the painter caught all the fascination of her looks, and put into her eyes a lustre new to English art. In other respects, there was a strange deficiency of taste and propriety ; the actress was painted in a winter cloak and muff, with naked arms. It was nevertheless favourably compared with Reynolds, whose Mrs. Billington, as St. Cecilia, was well remembered, and considered equal to Hoppner, who ten years older, and with the patronage of the Prince of Wales, which brought half the loveliness of the land to his easel, supplied the Exhibition annually with likenesses of ladies of quality. The public praised, but criticism was not sparing. Lawrence had never felt the rod before, and was astonished and confounded with the complaint of want of propriety in the costume, till he was tranquillised by the assurance of Burke, that “ painters’ proprieties are the best,” — a sentence more neat than just.

His portraits in oil of the Queen and of the Princess Amelia, exhibited in 1788, told that he had won the notice and patronage of the throne. How this was achieved — for no one has imputed it to the sense which the King could entertain of his merit, since his Majesty had long rejected Reynolds — has never yet been related. George III. had an aversion to all artists who claimed fame from having studied abroad, and Lawrence was wholly of home manufacture. By whatever means obtained, he had skill enough to retain his advantage. *He pleased the Princesses by his pencil, and by*

his manners ; and he won the regard of the foreign domestics, by well-timed and gentle flirtations with the spouse of one of the court musicians. These latter were in their nature so harmless, as to amuse the lady herself, and excite merriment in the King and Queen, who occasionally rallied him upon his gallantry. Those whom the King desired to honour, were in the sure way to preferment. He had been chiefly instrumental in founding the Royal Academy, and considered it one of the blessings of his reign, in which all men of merit in his sight had a right to participate. But by the law which the King had himself sanctioned, no artist could be admitted an associate under twenty-four years of age ; and as Lawrence was only twenty-one, his Majesty was in despair, till some one cunning in the art of evading what cannot be properly met, proposed that he should be made a sort of extra or supplemental associate, till his standing might entitle him to come in regularly. This was eagerly supported by Reynolds and West, but opposed by thirty-seven of their brethren, who brought forward one Wheatley, and elected him in the teeth of the royal recommendation. On the next vacancy, Lawrence was proposed again ; he was yet far from four-and-twenty ; and several members said the evasion of the law was destructive of all order, and that the royal wish, though courteously expressed, was an attack upon their independence : — however, on the 10th of November, 1791, he was elected a supplemental associate ; a sort of honour which no one has enjoyed either before or since.

All this escaped not the notice of the audacious

and malicious satirist, Peter Pindar. He wrote a lampoon, called "Rights of Kings," in which he ironically claims for the monarch the right to be gratified in the "minutest of his predilections," and expostulates with the members of the Academy for having insolently admitted Wheatley, and rejected "a Mr. Lawrence, whom the King, from his superior knowledge of painting, is convinced has fair pretensions to the honours of an R. A." Of the verse one specimen may suffice:—

"Behold, his Majesty is in a passion!
Tremble, ye rogues! and tremble all the nation!
Suppose he takes it in his royal head,
To strike your academic idol dead;
Knock down your house, dissolve you in his ire,
And strip you of your boasted title, 'Squire.'"

I know not what Wolcot said in verse, or what the Academicians said in prose, when, on the death of Reynolds, in the year 1792, Lawrence was appointed to succeed him in his office of painter in ordinary to the King. He was then only some two-and-twenty years old; and Opie, Hoppner, and Romney, were in the full enjoyment of health and reputation. The portrait of the Countess of Derby had done much; but this royal distinction did more for the fame of Lawrence. To the world, who seldom looks with very penetrating eyes, it seemed that a youth, newly arrived at man's estate, was considered by the court of Britain as the first of the land in art. Several of his brethren were secretly sore at the preference; and nothing but the gentleness and conciliating nature of Lawrence pre-

vented him from becoming an object of dislike among them.

The King ordered him to paint whole lengths of himself and the Queen, to be presented by Lord Macartney to the Emperor of China; and, as the fame of this somewhat romantic expedition flew over the earth, the circumstance of the royal portraits from the pencil of Lawrence was not left untold.

With this increase of honour, the painter's desire of display extended a little: he grew more sumptuous in his dress; took splendid apartments in Old Bond Street; and, justly distrusting his own talents in household economy, he made his friend Farington, who was not incumbered with commissions, his secretary, allowing him to draw twenty pounds per week for domestic outlay. How his income, at this time mortgaged to Angerstein, to liquidate a large advance of money, might have succeeded under his own management, I know not: it is well known that it did not prosper in the hands of the new chamberlain. "I began life wrongly," said Lawrence, in after years. "I spent more money than I earned, and involved myself in debt, for which I have been paying heavy interest." His usual price at this period for a full length portrait, was one hundred guineas; for a half length, fifty; and for the head size, twenty-five.

Royal favour and public fame had now made him, in his twenty-third year, a person of note and consideration: when his paintings made their appearance in the Exhibition, their beauty

of drawing, and truth of colouring, were sharply criticised. He had been hitherto accustomed, except in one instance, to hear of nothing but "the wonderful portraits of the wonderful youth;" and to see writers, who were sharp and sour with others, grow milk and honey to him. "This is a matchless effusion of early genius," said one. "This is a magnificent portrait by the self-taught boy of Devizes," said a second. "A second Raphael — a second Raphael in person and mind," shouted a third; while a fourth cried, "There is the presence of genius in all he does; he will rise the Michael Angelo of England!" When he grew to manhood, and kings and queens praised him, criticism altered its tone; though, assuredly, it could not plead in extenuation of the charge that Lawrence had fallen off; in fact, he had risen in every point, and was still rising. One of the fiercest of this race was a man better known as Antony Pasquin, than by his own name of Williams.* He was silent so long as Reynolds ruled; but on West's elevation to the chair, an artist whom he hated because the King loved him, his venomous nature broke out, and Lawrence had to suffer as well as others. The principle of his criticism was to express unbounded admiration of art; to speak with rapture of the high historic, of the poetic landscape, and of the fine manly style of portraiture; and then never to admit that any one in the Academy, man or woman (ladies were

* This wretched Williams is one of the chief victims of Gifford's "Baviad and Mæviad."

then members), had at all approached the standard of excellence.

Of this man's criticisms I shall collect a few specimens : there is some cleverness, and much of that "snip-snap short, and interruption smart," which a higher spirit of the same tribe complains of in the dunces of his day. He is speaking of Lawrence's portraits : — " 1. This is a likeness of Sir Gilbert Elliot : as this portrait is *not finished*, I shall forbear to investigate its merits or demerits. 2. Portrait of an Archbishop. This is a likeness of the spiritual lord of Canterbury. It conveys a full idea of the florid, well-fed visage of this fortunate arch-prelate ; and a monk better appointed never sighed before the tomb of Becket. 3. Portrait of a Nobleman. This is a likeness of Lord Auckland, a man to whom the capricious goddess has been equally bountiful. This heterogeneous nobleman is so fantastically enveloped in drapery, that I cannot ascertain what is meant for his coat, and what for the curtain : they are all of the same strength and importance. He appears to think so intently, that his eye-balls seem bursting from their spheres. 4. Portrait of a Lady of Quality. This is a whole length of Lady Emily Hobart in the character of Irene. The face is chalky and sickly ; the robe is so white, and so unencumbered with shadow, that it might pass for an habiliment of porcelain texture. While I viewed it, I was betrayed from the recollection of the surrounding objects, and I momentarily imagined that if I cast a stone at the vestment, I should shiver it to pieces. 5. Portrait of a Gentleman. This, \

believe, is the portrait of Mr. (Payne) Knight, and is repulsive in the attitude. It fills one with the idea of an irascible pedagogue explaining Euclid to a dunce. Mr. Lawrence began his professional career upon a false and delusive principle: his portraits were delicate, but not true; and because he met the approbation of a few fashionable spinsters, he vainly imagined that his labours were perfect. — He may claim the merit, like Epicurus of old, of being self-taught. If he had enjoyed the advantage of having studied in Italy, and been bred in the school of the Caracci, instead of the seminaries of Somersetshire, I think he might have ranked among the most prominent masters in either of the Roman or Florentine Academies. All the assistance he had to cultivate his genius was the unremitting attention of a tender father, who, though he knew but little of the arts, knew much of his duty. It is but justice to Mr. Lawrence to say, that he repays this parental kindness with the most filial piety."

Having abused his portraits, and eulogised his character, Pasquin proceeds to discuss his powers in historical composition. "Swift, in his advice to a young divine, recommends him to abstain from attempts at wit; for it was possible he might not possess any. For the same reason, I would recommend to Mr. Lawrence to discontinue his attempts at the sublime in painting: it is dangerous ground, where to fail is to be contemptible. He has not ballast enough in his mind. The most important effort of a young *painter* should be to yoke his imagination in the

trammels of reason, so that the sober movements of the one may set boundaries to the wildnesses of the other. Though this is truly difficult, it must be effected ; or else the licentiousness of that quiet creating spirit will only give variegated monsters to the sight, which can never be subservient to historic truth or moral allegory."

These, and remarks such as these, the fortunate portrait painter was obliged to endure. Other men were not wanting who whispered that he could copy, but could not create ; that it was well for him the ladies of England were lovely and the gentlemen rich, else fame and he had never fallen acquainted. He was stung, it is said, with such observations, and mentally resolved to assert his claims to the title of creator of mind, as well as copier of forms. He sought about for a subject ; and while he was hesitating between Shakspeare and Milton, the Royal Academy admitted him a member, December 4. 1795 ; and immediately many titled and important persons entered their names as candidates for their likenesses. Much as Lawrence longed to dip his brush in the hues of history, he was not insensible that he was labouring on borrowed money ; that the votaries of fancy and poetry were paid with applause alone ; while those who ministered to the vanities of men, by perpetuating their looks, came in for their share of the good things of this life. Contenting himself, therefore, with thinking of poetical subjects, or making sketches in moments of leisure, — he now addressed himself, with great diligence, to the task of portraiture. Of

the numerous heads dashed in during the period when the historical fever was on him, the only one worth mentioning, for the sake of the subject, is that of Cowper the poet, exhibited in 1795. Letters, too, passed between the painter and the author of "The Task." The vigorous graphic simplicity of those by the latter contrast strangely with the feeble prettinesses of the former. The poet invited him to Weston; and his last words are, "When will you give me a drawing of the old oak?"

It had been for some time whispered that Lawrence was busied on a grand poetic work. His friends alone were admitted to see it during progress. The grandeur of the outlines, the magnificence of the colouring, and the sublimity of the sentiment, were all spoken of in more than the common rapture of eulogy. The subject was, however, left a secret till the exhibition of 1797 opened up the mystery, when it was found to be Satan calling to his legions,

"Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen."

The first that spoke was Fuseli; he complained, and he criticised. His complaint was, that Lawrence had stolen his devil from him; and his criticism was, that the figure was the Lubber Fiend, and not the Master Fiend of Milton; in short, a fine piece of colour, and a failure. In truth Fuseli imagined, that no one had the power to paint from the great poets but himself; and, moreover, whenever he saw a passage from either Shakspeare or Milton poetically handled, he seldom failed to declare that "he had sketched the

very self-same thing—that he was careless of his designs, and showed them to too many; but, never mind,—he could afford it; and let the poor creature keep what it had stolen.” That Fuseli said all this openly was not unknown to Lawrence, who adverted to it the very last time I had the pleasure of being alone with him. These were his words: — “Fuseli, sir, was the most satirical of human beings: he had also the greatest genius for art of any man I ever knew. His mind was so essentially poetic, that he was incapable of succeeding in any ordinary subject. That figure of Satan, now before you, occasioned the only interruption which our friendship, of many years’ standing, ever experienced. He was, you know, a great admirer of Milton, from whom he had made many sketches. When he first saw my Satan, he was nettled, and said, ‘You borrowed the idea from me.’ — ‘In truth, I did take the idea from you,’ I said; ‘but it was from your person, not from your paintings. When we were together at Stackpole Court, in Pembrokeshire, you may remember how you stood on yon high rock which overlooks the bay of Bristol, and gazed down upon the sea which rolled so magnificently below. You were in raptures; and while you were crying,—‘Grand! grand! Jesu Christ, how grand! how terrific!’ you put yourself in a wild posture; I thought on the Devil looking into the abyss, and took a slight sketch of you at the moment: here it is. My Satan’s posture now, was yours then.”

When Fuseli was pacified, there were others who refused to be pleased. “The figure of Satan,”

said the common persecutor, Pasquin, "is colossal and very ill drawn; the body is so disproportioned to the extremities, that it appears all legs and arms, and might, at a distance, be mistaken for a sign of the Spread Eagle. The colouring has as little analogy to truth as the contour; for it is so coloured that it conveys an idea of a mad sugar-baker dancing naked in the conflagration of his own treacle. But the liberties taken with his infernal majesty are so numerous, so various, and so insulting, that we are amazed that the ecclesiastic orders do not interfere in behalf of an old friend." Men, milder of mood than this surly savage, were not wanting, who spoke of the merits and defects of this noble picture in the language of civility. Such flights, however, as the sublime poet required in the embodiment of his thoughts, were beyond the power of Lawrence. His Satan wants the majestic melancholy and lofty malignity of the Archangel ruined: he could have painted the soft and the effeminate Belial: the master fiend required an artist of a sterner and higher mood. Poetry produces such painters frequently. See with what true Miltonic vigour Byron portrays Satan on his unwonted visit to the gates of heaven:—

" But, bringing up the rear of this bright host,
A spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved:
His brow was like the deep when tempest-tost:
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space."

That the reputation which Lawrence achieved by his portraits filled up in earlier years the measure of his ambition, we have the assurance of his own tongue ; but as he improved in skill of hand, and in happiness of posture, so likewise did his desire of excellence in the higher departments of art increase. I know not what he thought of his success in the grand style ; but it was generally felt by others, that in portraiture he was less approachable than in the historic. He wished, however, to show to the world that he was not a mere face painter, as the brethren of the fancy department insultingly called him. "The Satan," he said, "answered my secret motives in attempting it ; my success in portraits will no longer be thought accident or fortune ; and if I have trod the second path with honour, it is because my limbs are strong. My claims are acknowledged by the circle of taste, and are undisputed by competitors and rivals." This is the language of a man much disposed to be on civil terms with himself ; and perhaps it is, after all, preferable to the depreciating tone in which many able men speak of the works of their own hands. But he did not trust his fame for the season to "Satan." He exhibited a very noble portrait of Mrs. Siddons ; all eyes, save one, saw the truth and grandeur of the picture. "It is no more like her than Hebe is like Bellona," said the intrepid Pasquin. "We have here youth, flexibility of features, and an attempt at the formation of beauty, to denote a lady who is proverbially so stern in her countenance that it approaches to savageness." The beauty of all criticism is

truth. Honest Anthony seems not to have been over solicitous about the accuracy of what he said. If, however, he has preserved, amid all his bitterness, the words of Reynolds when he first saw the portraits of Lawrence, we can forgive him. "This young man has begun at a point of excellence where I left off," are the words Sir Joshua is said to have used; and they are supposed to allude to the fine drawing which was now added to fine colour.

The vexation of perplexing criticisms was forgotten in the double loss which Lawrence was now doomed to sustain in the death of his mother, whom he dearly loved, and of his father also, who, amid all his caprices, forgot not that he was blessed with such a son. He stood looking, it is said, long, long, on the serene face of his mother; not a tear fell; he touched her hand, and said, "That hand, not an hour since, held mine, and seemed unwilling to part with me!" He burst into tears, and sat down beside her. His father was grown old and feeble, and afflicted with a cough. Lawrence was engaged with a sitter when a letter came from Rugby, saying that his father was dying. He took a place in the first conveyance, and hurried into the country, but came too late. "He died," said his son, "before I could reach him; but he died full of affection to us; of firm faith and fortitude; and without a groan." The memory of his mother he cherished to the last with the most affectionate endearment.

To paint up to the expectations of captious critics was, perhaps, what Lawrence never tried: *he probably thought the praise he received was*

right, and the censure wrong. Be that as it may, his chief study was to meet the rivalry of Hoppner, who had, at this time, nearly monopolised the youthful beauty of the nation. This rivalry was perhaps injurious to the true fame of Lawrence: he complained that Hoppner had an undue share of soft and courtly customers; and turning his attention to the alluring graces and gentle delicacies of his art, obtained the mastery over all competitors, at the expense of that stately and serene simplicity of style which ought to have been his mark. This was not the work of a day, nor yet of a year: the strife between the court painters was maintained for many seasons; sometimes public opinion was with Hoppner, sometimes with Lawrence; but it was observed by all good judges, that the latter was gaining ground in the race; that the fascinations of his style were prevailing against all opposition. I have spoken elsewhere of the satiric comments of Hoppner, on some of his rival's ladies: the objection has been revived in our own day by a witty poet, who said, "Phillips shall paint my wife, and Lawrence my mistress."

He heard, it is said, not without some concern, this species of remark, and resolved to give to the world an image or two of a sterner stamp. Satan, he said, was altogether imagination; his portraits were lucky realities; some work uniting the two would, he thought, succeed: and he painted "*Coriolanus at the Hearth of Aufidius*." This work, exhibited in 1798, received some censure and much praise; was called a failure by some, and a triumph by others. He thought very well of it

himself, and when questioned respecting its class, said, "I call it a half-history picture." It was a portrait. He sought for the noble Roman in the looks and form of John Kemble; and caught much of the manner and the manliness of one of the most heroic of all actors. The fine figure, the fine posture, and the fine colouring, charmed the multitude, and nearly disarmed criticism. But these, alluring as they are, must be considered only as the shell or husk of the fierce majestic spirit of the proud soldier: in this mental effort he has seriously failed. The genius of the artist lay with the serenely beautiful and the calmly contemplative; his hand was too delicate for the stern austerity of the Roman. Besides, who can paint a volcano ready to burst out, or a bomb about to explode? Nor can it be said that he was more successful in catching the character of a Scottish mountaineer. He attired his "Chief of Kintail"* like a harlequin, — the picturesque costume of the north, mingled indifferently with the act-of-parliament regimentals of the south: the Highland bonnet, too, sat ungracefully on a powdered head. He was more successful in the portraits of the ladies exhibited along with these. His "Mrs. Angerstein with her children," has the simplicity we love, and which we think the most unattainable of all the charms of art.

Lawrence was now thirty years old: kings and princes were his patrons, and peers and peeresses his companions; nor had England a genius who reckoned not his acquaintance a pleasure, if

* The late Lord Seaforth.

not an honour. By his pencil he opened his way to the domestic society of the noblest, and by the charms of his conversation he secured the regard of the most fastidious: he sketched ladies' heads in company, added his name, and presented them to the parties with a grace which was sometimes as well received as the gift. He recited the sterner or tenderer passages from Shakspeare in a way worthy of the stage, and ladies called him • a more graceful Garrick; and when to all this was added that he wrote poetry with great readiness, fair hands were held rapturously up, and "painter, player, and poet," was the exclamation of all. That Lawrence wrote verses was at first known to a chosen friend or two; then the secret escaped into his letters, and finally became the talk of the coterie and the town: curiosity was excited; and this was in some measure gratified by the painter, who, to save himself the trouble and the blush of reciting his own compositions, wrote them in a neat hand into a small neat volume, and many friends were indulged with a look. This made a stir for a time: when the verses were forgotten, the painter nevertheless kept up his intercourse with Parnassus: he mentions the Muse with the reverence of a votary in his letters; and in one written within a year of his death he speaks of poetry as an art which he practised in private.

The knack of writing rhyme, in which so many excel, is frequently mistaken for the poet's power, which it resembles as much as the unconscious quiverings of galvanism resemble the fiery beatings of an impassioned heart. This knack of

rhyme our painter assuredly had. His verses are mostly in the despairing *Thyrsis* strain; and it is plain, from their want of nature and passion, that he sung of what he did not feel. He sometimes, however, threw off the man of sorrow, and put on an aspect of mirth. The following "Thoughts on being alone after Dinner," are favourable specimens of his intermediate style.

" Well, here 's to her, who, far away,
Cares not that I am grave or gay;
So now no more I 'll drink,
But fold my arms and meditate,
And clap my feet upon the grate,
And on grave matters think.

" 'T is, let me see, full sixteen years,
And wondrous short the time appears,
Since, with enquiry warm,
With beauty's novel power amazed,
I follow'd, midst the crowd, and gazed
On Siddons' beauteous form.

" Up Bath's fatiguing streets I ran,
Just half pretending to be man,
And fearful to intrude;
Busied I look'd on some employ,
Or limp'd to seem some other boy,
Lest she should think me rude.

" The sun was bright, and on her face,
As proud to show the stranger grace,
Shone with its purest rays;
And through the folds that veil'd her form,
Motion display'd its happiest charm,
To catch the admiring gaze.

" The smiling lustre of her eyes,
That triumph'd in our wild surprise,
Well I remember still:

They spoke of joy to yield delight,
And plainly said, ' If I 'm the sight,
Good people, take your fill.' "

These lines were written regarding one with whom at least he imagined himself in love: yet when he addressed her in a graver strain, he was less successful: —

" Hear, angel, hear! be conscious to the line,
Though rude the sounds: no syren art is mine:
All is spring round thee, hear a wintry lyre,
Touch'd with a lover's, not a poet's, fire.
And ye who seal my doom, whose thoughtful care
Would steel her senses to my heart's despair,
Behold me reverence still, but disobey:
Yes, 'tis the wretched Lawrence' daring lay!
Upbraid me, scorn me, hate me, if ye can,
I play the lover, and I am but man.
Unknown, uncertain, the most envied fate,
And many sorrows wait the happiest state:
None too so humble, but can humbler see,
And there are idiots who can envy me.
Oh! sweet one, tell them what it is to love;
Do thou the wretchedness they envy prove;
Hold up the wreath thy charms have doom'd to fade,
And show the last example thou hast made."

These lines, indifferent as they are, allude to the heroine of a tragic story, which I shall relate as it has been told to me.

The agreeable manners, and high talents of Lawrence, opened for him, even in extreme youth, the doors of every house where genius was respected, or pleasant company coveted. One of his chief friends was Mrs. Siddons, the great actress. She had sat to him, when he was young, in the character of Zara, and afterwards in that of Aspasia; and such was the

skill of his delineations, that they were engraved, and a vast number of impressions sold. She was, therefore, a benefactress; for no one will deny that her fame and her noble looks attracted purchasers and patrons. Two lovely daughters, at this time, adorned her fireside. To both, — the story says, — when they grew up, he was most sedulous in his attentions; complimentary in public, when both were together, and passionate and overflowing with love in private, when there was but one to hear. To one, however, he spoke more warmly or more successfully than to the other. She listened to his vows and protestations, and believed that he was sincere. He had no sooner gained her affections, than, without cold words, altered looks, or any dispute whatever, he turned from her to her sister, and had the audacity to make love and offer her marriage almost in the same breath. This opened the eyes of both; but it was too late for one: the perfidious lover was dismissed; but the young lady was so affected that she drooped and died.

Such is the story once whispered about, and now more openly related since the death of those who would have been most affected by hearing it. In comparing it, however, with the character of Lawrence, and coupling it with the circumstance that he ever after continued on good terms with the family of which Mrs. Siddons was a member, I must indulge the hope that public rumour and private scandal united, as they often do, to darken this tale, and fix a tragic spot on *one of the great heirs of fame in art.* He has

found apologists, such as a handsome man, who could flatter with both tongue and pencil, will readily find. A lady with compassionate tenderness of heart, and a disposition more than merciful, speaks thus softly of his failings : — “ His character was beautiful, and much to be loved ; his manners were likely to mislead without his intending it. He could not write a common answer to a dinner invitation, without its assuming the tone of a billet-doux ; the very commonest conversation was held in that soft low whisper, and with that tone of deference and interest, which are so unusual, and so calculated to please. I am myself persuaded that he never intentionally gave pain. He was not a male coquet ; he had no plan of conquest. All that I know of his attachment was the ill-fated and never-to-be-defended —— affair.” The conclusion of this singular apology refers to the fate of Miss Siddons ; the commencement, to his conduct in other attachments, if they merit so tender a name. Common rumour, after relating the tale in its most painful shape, mournfully adds, that, as the anniversary of the death of Miss Siddons came round, he gave way to uncontrollable bursts of melancholy ; that he wore mourning for her sake while he lived ; and sealed his letters with black wax. He certainly, in general, wore a black coat, but this was probably a matter of taste ; all artists abhor gilt buttons. I am assured by one who knew both Lawrence and Mrs. Siddons well, that the young lady died much in the usual way of disease and a doctor.

Lawrence, so far from breaking with the family

of Miss Siddons, continued to make use of her uncle and natural protector John Kemble, a man of the highest personal character, and even of romantic sentiments of honour, as a model for his "half-historical pieces." Rolla, Cato, and Hamlet, all followed in the train of Coriolanus. The Rolla, a splendid picture, is perhaps a little melo-dramatic; but so is the play in which Rolla appears. The colouring is fine, and the drawing nearly faultless. The Cato will never be named as one of the finest of the painter's works: Kemble is trying with all his might to put on the looks of the "last of the Romans,"—but he fails. It is far otherwise with the Hamlet; a work of the highest kind,—sad, thoughtful, melancholy; with looks conversing with death and the grave; a perfect image of the prince of the great dramatist. This picture Lawrence himself placed above all his works, except the Satan: but it far surpasses the Satan in propriety of action, accuracy of expression, and grandeur of colouring. The light touches the face and bosom, and falls on the human skull on which he is musing. It is one of the noblest paintings of the modern school. Many wish it had been the pleasure of Lawrence to have given his country more works of this stamp; and no doubt we could have spared some scores of those "unlettered nameless faces," of which his pencil was so prolific; but which, nevertheless, must be mentioned, as they employed most of his time, and constituted the main source of his fortune, if not even of his popular fame.

Eminent painters were now arising on all sides: *in addition to Opie, Hoppner, and Beechey, Shee*

began to distinguish himself both in literature and art. Phillips, too, had shown such poetic feeling in his portrait of Blake, as raised him high among his brethren. The elder artists lost the lead in portrait; and Lawrence, when little more than thirty years of age, stood highest in this department. I speak with less certainty about his pre-eminence in limning the lords of the creation than of his superiority in portraying those softer and more delicate looks, which, expressing little save love, and grace, and gentle sensibility, are as elusive to the brush as quicksilver to the touch. A manly face is one of those broad marks easily hit; it tells much, and by seizing only a part of the expression the likeness is secured: not so with the face of beauty; it is composed of many delicate pencillings, and colours laid on by nature's most cunning hand: and these must be all imitated, else the character which they unite in forming will be lost. Lawrence, while busied with his *Rolla* and his *Hamlet*, painted the portraits of, — 1. Mrs. Byng; 2. Sophia Upton; 3. Caroline Upton; 4. Lady Templeton; 5. the Marchioness of Exeter; 6. Lady Conyngham; 7. Lady C. Hamilton; 8. Miss Lambe; 9. Mrs. Thellusson and Child; 10. Mrs. Williams. Some of these were ladies of distinguished beauty. There were others of pre-eminent rank and talent: the Princess of Wales, the Princess Charlotte, and, once more, Mrs. Siddons.

Of the male portraits of this time, the most remarkable was that of the eloquent Curran; under mean and harsh features, a genius of the highest order lay concealed, like a sweet kernel in a

rough husk : and so little of the true man did Lawrence perceive in his first sittings, that he almost laid down his palette in despair, in the belief that he could make nothing but a common or vulgar work. The parting hour came, and with it the great Irishman burst out in all his strength : he discoursed on art, on poetry, on Ireland : his eyes flashed, and his colour heightened, and his rough and swarthy visage seemed, in the sight of the astonished painter, to come fully within his own notions of manly beauty. "I never saw you till now," said the artist in his softest tone of voice ; "you have sat to me in a mask ; do give me a sitting of Curran the orator." Curran complied, and a fine portrait, with genius on its brow, was the consequence. The vehement Irishman was followed by a philosophical Scot ; but I have heard no one praise his head of Sir James Mackintosh : yet it is serene and contemplative, and an excellent likeness of a most humane and worthy, as well as great man. His portraits of Lord Erskine, Lord Thurlow, Mr. Wyndham, and Sir William Grant, belong to the same period. The hours of the painter were now fully employed : he rose early, and he worked late ; for though no one excelled more in rapid sketches, he had a true enthusiasm for his art, and would not dismiss hastily any thing for which he was to be paid as a picture. He detained his sitters often for three hours at a time ; had generally eight or nine of these sittings ; and all the while studied their looks anxiously, and seemed to do nothing without care and consideration. His constant practice was to

begin by making a drawing of the head full size on canvass; carefully tracing in dimensions and expression. This took up one day: on the next he began to paint; touching in the brows, the nose, the eyes, and the mouth, and finally the bounding line in succession. Lawrence sometimes, nay often, laid aside the first drawing of a head, and painted on a copy. This was from his fear of losing the benefit of first impressions, which in such cases are often invaluable. It may be added, that he stood all the while, and was seldom so absorbed in his undertaking, that he did not converse with his sitter, and feel either seriousness or humour, whilst giving thought to the brow, or beauty to the cheek. Reynolds said he loved portrait painting, for it brought him pleasant company, and required little outlay of thought.

Some of his high sitters had the address to call out the painter, the poet, and the player in succession, so much to the satisfaction of the artist, that in his letters to his friends, he would give detailed accounts of the company he had seen, and the honours which had been done him. Of two plays acted at the seat of Lord Abercorn, in which Lawrence performed along with the Hamiltons and Lindsays, he used to give an account, Fuseli said, in the style of a stage manager. It will be enough to say, that he acted the part of Lord Rakeland, in "The Wedding Day," and of Grainger, in "Who's the Dupe?" before the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Abercorn, and Sheridan; was applauded; and imagined he gained rather than lost in the esteem of the great by this exhibi-

tion. But he had some misgivings in the matter, and wrote a long letter to his sister, declaring that he would perform in no other family, save that of his early friend, Lord Abercorn; and, moreover, that Lady Cahir, now Countess of Glengall, who acted Lady Contest, was so beautiful, that he felt love-making to be very easy.

He was now suspected of serious love-making in a higher quarter, and the charge made against him moved him deeply. For some time Lawrence had been a frequent guest at Montague House, Blackheath, the residence of the Princess of Wales; and as he continued his attentions after the portrait of that unfortunate lady was finished, his visits were ascribed to no proper motive. This was rigorously enquired into by commissioners appointed to investigate the general conduct of her Royal Highness. Light of heart, and of a natural levity, which disregarded the smaller delicacies of her sex; deserted, or driven away, by one who had taken upon himself the office of her protector; and with the freer than English manners of a foreign land to aggravate all; this weak princess was exposed more than most ladies to such insinuations. From all that was criminal, the charity or the justice of the commissioners of that day entirely freed her; and the conduct of the painter would have been forgotten in a week, had not his own restiveness under the suspicion, hurried him before a magistrate, to make oath that his visits arose from friendship, and were platonic and pure. From being a partaker in folly with the Princess, nay, even from all suspicion of levities, the award of

Lords Grenville, Spencer, Erskine, and Ellenborough, had completely exculpated him : yet such was his sensitiveness, or his vanity, that he made oath, that though he had sometimes been alone with the royal lady both early and late, he should not have had the least objection, had all the world heard or seen what took place. In justice to the unhappy Princess, we must lay the blame of all those insinuations respecting the visits of Lawrence to the almost incredible imprudence of the painter : he requested permission to sleep all night at Montague House, in order that he might rise betimes to work at the portraits ; he made himself as acceptable as he could, and by his pleasant conversation, kept the Princess from her chamber sometimes till one or two o'clock in the mornings ; and, finally, he informed a lady of the royal household, that the Princess preferred him to all other visitors. A lady—one of those who thought the poetry and the conversation of Lawrence alike inspired — whispered, in a fever of alarm, that he would surely *lose his head*.

From the period of the “ Delicate Investigation ” of 1806, till the death of Hoppner, in 1810, Lawrence was less heard of than usual ; even his excess of sitters seems to have abated somewhat. Perhaps no one credited the injurious rumours which he had condescended to repel by oath : yet something like suspicion was attached to his name ; for scandal, like a reptile crawling over a bright glass, leaves a trail and a stain behind. A change had taken place in the feelings of the court : Beechey now engaged the patronage of

the palace; Hoppner was still the favourite of the Prince of Wales; and Owen having come into the great market of portraiture with all the *éclat* of a successful beginner, the friends of Lawrence imagined that his popularity was on the wane. This was a lost fear; he stood still alone, and unrivalled, in the captivating department of beauty. His Lady Elizabeth Foster*, in the character of a Sibyl, among the ruins of the Temple of Tivoli, and the Hon. Lady Hood†, were equal, at least, to any similar works from his hand; but they were the only female portraits which he exhibited during four years; a proof that the cloud still rested upon his character. His male sitters increased in numbers. 1. The Hon. Charles (now Earl) Grey. 2. Lord Amherst. 3. Lord Ellenborough. 4. Sir Joseph Banks. 5. Earl of Aberdeen. 6. William Pitt. 7. Lord Castlereagh. 8. George Canning. 9. Lord Melville. There was considerable talent visible on all these portraits; the best, perhaps, is that of Lord Aberdeen. The notorious Peter Finnerty, who had often libelled Lord Castlereagh, in his remarks on that nobleman's portrait in the Morning Chronicle, was ironically critical:—"The portrait of Lord Castlereagh, by Lawrence, is not a likeness. It has a smug, smart, upstart, haberdasher look, of which there is nothing in his Lordship. The air, too, of the whole figure is direct and forward; there is nothing, as there ought to be, characteristi-

* Afterwards Duchess of Devonshire.

† Now the Hon. Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie, of Seaforth.

cally circuitous, involved, and parenthetical about it. Besides, the features are cast in quite a different mould; as a bust, Lord Castlereagh's is one of the finest we have ever seen: it would do for one of the Roman Emperors, bating the expression." Lawrence, who had not lately been handled in such sort, complained in no gentle tone. Perry, the editor, tried in vain to pacify him, and offered to make up for the offence another time; but the painter refused to be comforted.

One of his paintings of this period almost all critics concurred in admiring; this was a conversation piece, and of a family nature, containing Sir Francis Baring, his son John, and his son-in-law Charles Wall; the former, a merchant, grown grey in commerce, seems laying down the law of loss and gain to his children, who are listening with grave attention. Painters, who usually criticise by comparison, said, — "This is a fine Venetian looking picture, possessing all the luxuriance and splendour of Paul Veronese. In the centre is seen a body of fine warm colouring, of various hues and delicious tone, accompanied by so much cold colour as gives value and support to the principal, of all which the arrangement is excellent." I know not that a spectator, unacquainted with the secrets of art, and who cares little concerning the class or school to which a work belongs, providing it has sentiment and nature, would admire this picture so much. The character of the heads is in a graver style than is common to Lawrence, and the colouring is more true to nature, and of a more massive kind

than ordinary ; but the whole wants that flash and glow which captivate in some of his portraits.

The professional life of a portrait painter is supposed to be unvaried and monotonous. In the story of a day, men imagine they read the history of a whole year, and perceive in the style and handling of a couple of heads, the beauties of a whole gallery. This, however, is not the case. A successful painter of this class is considered as a chief in his art ; he is the favourite guest of the opulent and the noble ; he is caressed by all who wish to sit at his easel : all our young gentlemen who desire to look like senators, and all our young ladies who have a wish to be numbered with nymphs and goddesses, pay him court, and are of his faction ; his intercourse with princes and peers is supposed to have fitted him for presiding among his companions, and he takes, in the eyes of mankind and himself, rank over the professors of landscape and history. All this applies strictly to Lawrence : death having removed one competitor — his own skill having conquered others — and the cloud of calumnies being gradually dispersed — he stood alone, and without a rival, in the rare art of making the canvass breathe of youth, and gentleness, and beauty. He was now on the verge of middle life ; his name had reached the uttermost ends of the civilised earth ; he was on good terms with most of his brethren ; and was looked up to as one who, by the skill of his hand, the courtliness of his manners, and his intercourse with the great, was all but the head of the Academy. Greek Street, in which he

had for some time lived, began to sink in respectability of appearance, as more ambitious looking streets arose ; upon which he removed to 65, Russell Square, where his household gods found a suitable sanctuary.

Here he set up his easel, never to be moved again by his own hand, and arranged his own pictures, and the fine collection which he had been for many years forming of the drawings and studies of the great masters of modern art. His principal room was crowded with portraits in all stages of study : some had the brows, and eyes, and nose, and mouth touched in ; others had the shoulders rudely added ; while a third class exhibited the head exquisitely finished, swimming, as it were, in an ocean of ink, and only abiding the leisure of the artist to obtain a body. At one time I saw the heads of Scott, Campbell, West, Fuseli, all awaiting their turn to be exalted upon shoulders : hundreds more seemed in the same plight, some of which never obtained such a desirable elevation.

Unlike Reynolds, he maintained no table to return the invitations of his friends. He had no expensive retinue of servants. His house, save in paintings and treasures of art, was nakedly furnished : nor did he indulge any visible luxury whatever, except keeping a carriage and a pair of horses, which, indeed, was almost necessary for one who lived so much in society. On one occasion, when he was inveigled into a dinner, he sent for a note of the dishes which had covered the table of his friend Rogers, the poet, the day before, and had precisely a similar en-

tertainment served up to his unwelcome guests, saying, — “I have no wife to set my table in order, nor mistress to help me with her private instructions; but having seen you all happy where there was enough to eat and drink, I have ventured to try for once.”

These dinner fits came seldom; he, however, did not shun an evening party in a plain way at his own house. He had many anecdotes of arts and artists, and told them on such occasions with neatness and ease. His conversation, which in public places savoured of affected courtliness and a desire to please, relaxed into truth and nature at his own fireside: his laugh was then gay and hearty, his joke ready, and his sayings and remarks had an air of originality. The room in which he saw, during an evening hour, one or two friends, was more like a museum than a private apartment: busts of his favourites were ranged around: — Flaxman, Stothard, and Fuseli, by Baily: a statue of Michael Angelo, and another of Raphael, from the hand of Flaxman, stood upon pedestals, acting as guardian angels over the drawings which he had collected of those great masters; but, indeed, of every eminent artist he had such specimens as no other person possessed; not huddled into heaps, or scattered like the leaves of the Sibyl, but arranged in fine large portfolios properly labelled and enshrined. Of the designs of Fuseli he had thousands, and loved to look over them with those who could feel their worth: every new drawing had an anecdote, — some of mirth, and some of woe: he never grew weary in talking of Fuseli.

When the painter entered upon his new establishment, it was whispered about that he who had continued to remain a bachelor during five-and-twenty years of prosperity would live so no longer, and that a lady was about to take her place at its head. But Lawrence seemed without any such domestic inclination; he loved to talk and smile, and quote verse, with the engaging or the beautiful whom he met in company, or saw as sitters; but he never carried his views farther. He now and then imagined, and that at a late period of his life, that he loved and was beloved again; but reflection removed the film, and he perhaps felt that all the ecstasy of the passion was flown away with his youth, and that the life of love was well-nigh gone. He believed, if we may trust some of his confidential letters, that at fifty he inspired love in youthful bosoms, and that he was himself more under the influence of the passion than a wise man ought ever to be. He talks, too, of suffering from woman's caprice, when graver thoughts might have been his. "Of Miss Mary,"—he thus writes when advanced in life,— "I see nothing, and wish to see nothing; hers was a light heart, and mine an erring and self-blinded mind; yet she had virtues, and I at length have reason. Encourage me, dear madam, in my new rationality, that when I meet you again, I may tell you I have been gay, and virtuous, and good." These words were addressed to a married lady; he was fond of taking such into his confidence, and loved to speak to them of imaginary woes, and the sorrow which he was enduring from the cruelty or the caprice of some captious spinster.

He was followed to his new studio by more than even the usual number of sitters: he had gradually raised his prices for portraits as he advanced in fame. In 1802, his charge for a three quarters' size was thirty guineas; for a half length, sixty guineas; and for a whole length, one hundred and twenty guineas. In 1806, the three quarters rose to fifty guineas; and the whole length to two hundred. In 1808, he raised the smallest size to eighty guineas, and the largest to three hundred and twenty guineas: and in 1810, when the death of Hoppner swept all rivalry out of the way, he increased the price of the heads to one hundred, and the full lengths to four hundred guineas. He knew,—none better,—that the opulent loved to possess what was rare, and beyond the means of poorer men to purchase; the growing crowds of his sitters told him that his advance in price had not been ill received.

These high prices, and the vast number of his sitters, together with the humble and almost self-denying style in which he lived, failed to enrich him. Wealth fell upon him as rain into a sieve; he not only had little money in his pocket, but was frequently at a loss how to live for the day, and meet the current expenses of his establishment. No doubt, many sitters neglected to pay for their portraits when they were done; many only took a sitting or two, and not liking probably the posture in which he painted them, came no more; yet even in these cases, he was a gainer, for he commonly adhered to the old *rule of receiving half payment at the beginning*

of a portrait. There were other methods, too, of increasing his income, which none knew better how to practise. He lent his portraits to be engraved for very large sums, and was most scrupulous in exacting payment; nay, he conceived that a painter still retained a right in his work after he had been paid for it, and scarcely counted the proprietor a gentleman who allowed it to be engraved without his permission, and his sharing in the speculation. On this subject, he thus replied to the queries of a brother artist of eminence—Pickersgill:—"In answer to your question, I beg you to understand that where there is not a remuneration paid to me for the use of my pictures, it is when they are obtained without my consent; or where the mere legal power of the proprietor, from the purchase of the work, is considered by him as exempting him from the necessity, or rather propriety, of any reference to me upon the subject. I fully acknowledge and assert the right of every artist to remuneration for that use of his labours which is intended to be the source of profit to others, although the picture itself may have passed from his possession. The appeal will never be made in vain by him to any proprietor of enlightened mind or gentlemanly feeling. The artist ought to have, too, the right of choosing the engraver, and of directing the work." Such was Lawrence's opinion—but, assuredly, the law would never support it. Where there is no right expressly reserved by the painter, the purchaser becomes the sole proprietor of the work, and, as nobody disputes his right to burn it if he pleases, how is it possible

to maintain that he may not cause it to be engraved without consulting any one? Were it otherwise, there would soon be an end of the manufacture; for who would buy a painting and hold it in trust for the use and profit of others? These matters show that he was in nowise neglectful in affairs of professional profit; in truth, he was found by booksellers and engravers to be, with all his courtesy, extremely skilful in the ancient art of bargain-making, and rather hard to deal with, for all his softness of speech.

The victorious year 1814, which opened the gates of Paris to the army of the allies, also opened the doors of the Louvre to English artists; and thither, accordingly, Lawrence went, as soon as order was established, and travelling safe. His old friend, Sir Charles Stewart (now Marquis of Londonderry), who had shortly before this time succeeded in inducing the Prince Regent to overlook past offences, and patronize Lawrence, was now at Paris, and did every thing to make his visit agreeable to him. But from the treasures of the then untouched Louvre, he was soon recalled by the Prince Regent. The conquerors of the Conqueror, — the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, Prince Blucher, and the Hettman Platoff were waiting to take their turns at his easel. They sat for their portraits in York House, since pulled down, and replaced by a worthier building — the splendid mansion of the Duke of Sutherland. The pictures, painted in memory of the visit of those princes of the North, were publicly exhibited next year, along with a portrait of Prince Metternich, and one of

the Duke of Wellington,—the latter holding the sword of state, on the day of general thanksgiving for the return of peace. Of these, the head of Blucher, “the drunken hussar” of Napoleon’s memoirs, and Platoff, with his Asiatic visage, were the best. The Prince Regent bestowed the honour of knighthood upon the painter on the 22d of April, 1815, and assured him, that he was proud in conferring a mark of his favour on one who had raised the character of British art in the estimation of all Europe.

It was, perhaps, well for the fame of Lawrence that the nature of his studies called him frequently to use his skill on faces which had intellectual and external loveliness to recommend them. Images of gracefulness and beauty are eternal, and cannot decay : a new prince succeeds the old as naturally as dunces the second follows dunces the first in the satire of the poet, and die, and are no more ; the heroes of the last gazette will be forgotten in the heroes of the next ; but mental and bodily beauty are enduring things ; and of these Sir Thomas has preserved many likenesses : — 1. The Countess of Charlemont and her Children ; 2. the Countess Grey ; 3. Lady Ellenborough ; 4. Lady Leinster ; 5. Lady Grantham ; 6. Lady Emily Cowper ; 7. The Duchess of Sutherland ; 8. Lady Wigram ; 9. The Duchess of Gloucester ; 10. Mrs. Arbuthnot ; 11. Lady Mary Oglander ; 12. Lady Auckland and Children ; 13. Lady Elizabeth Leveson Gower ; 14. The Daughter of the Archduke Charles of Austria ; and, 15. Lady Selina Meade. Of these, the Duchess of Sutherland,

herself an artist of more than common talents, was remarkable for calm and totally unaffected dignity. Lady Emily Cowper (now Lady Ashley) vindicated the Italian title of the English Titian: she is, it is true, a child, but one of surpassing beauty; and her mild eyes look into one. Mrs. Arbuthnot fills up that place in female attraction, between the loveliness of the teens and the matron serenity of advanced years. Sir Thomas bestowed great pains on his female portraits, and took advantage of every circumstance that could contribute to their attraction. His wonderful power as a draughtsman gave him a command over the principles of beauty. With this *beau idéal* of excellence ever in his eye, he softened down the little rudenesses of living nature, and brought the features as much as possible within the bounding line of loveliness. This—the true foundation of all that is grand in the external of art—enabled him to triumph over all opposition. He went into detail, yet did not define: he left nothing untouched which went to aid the likeness, yet he was seldom little. That he was observant in small matters, the following enquiry concerning the embellishment of one of his female portraits will sufficiently show:—

“ Will you, my dear friend, ask for me, whether a pure white silk sash or girdle, with its rich gold fringe, would not be the most elegant of any alteration? and whether, with perfect propriety, I might not introduce a very tender rose, carelessly put in, of the purest blush, but just serving to tie together the curtain and drapery on which my lady sits? I think I can afford to tie part with

the blue, or, wanting it, with a violet or two, or border above the fringe may recall it." This may seem the trifling of the artist: but there can be no doubt that the rose of purest blush, and the violets of richest dye, were necessary to make the picture harmonious in colour, and consistent in composition.

The male portraits which passed from his studio at the same period, were numerous. In addition to the princes and peers already named, he painted the Earl of Lonsdale, Sir Thomas Grahame (now Lord Lynedoch), Sir Henry Englefield, Sir Charles Stewart (now Marquis of Londonderry), the Marquis Wellesley, the Duke of York the late Marquis of Abercorn, the Prince Regent, James Watt, the Bishop of London (Dr. Howley), the Bishop of Durham (Dr. Shute Barrington), Sir Henry Torrens, the Marquis of Anglesey, the Duke of Wellington, and Antonio Canova. The portrait of the inventor of the present power of the steam-engine was, I believe, painted after death, and is every way inferior to that fine head of him from the hand of Chantrey. The great Italian artist sat to Sir Thomas, and united with him in admiring the works of Fuseli. Men often admire in others what they want in themselves. Canova and Lawrence were all softness, and grace, and propriety. Fuseli was all fire, imagination, and extravagance; calling the graces which he could not catch, "trifles;" the proprieties of art, "tamenesses;" and gentle action, "want of mental energy." He too often spoke of Lawrence as a mere "face-maker;" and called Canova

an "emasculated Greek," averring that he had revived the Grecian sculpture in all but its manliness.

The discordant opinions delivered by artists and antiquarians on the merits of the Elgin marbles and their era, have been often discussed. The evidence of Lawrence, delivered in the year 1816, was pronounced at the time to be at variance with the principles on which he painted. "I am well acquainted," these are his words, "with the Elgin marbles: they are of the highest class of art; and to purchase them would be an essential benefit to the arts of this country. They would be of high importance in a line of art which I have very seldom practised; I mean, the historical: for, though I have seen the marbles in Paris, and know other figures of great name, the Elgin marbles present examples of a higher style of sculpture than any I have seen. I think they are beyond the Apollo. There is in them a union of fine composition and grandeur of form, with a *more true and natural expression of the effect of action upon the human frame*, than there is in the Apollo, or in any other of the most celebrated statues. I consider, on the whole, the Theseus as the most perfect piece of sculpture of a single figure that I have ever seen as *an imitation of nature*: but, as an imitation of character, I would not decide, unless I knew for what the figure was intended." One critic said "no one can read this evidence without surprise and astonishment. There stands 'the god of the unerring bow,' escaped in unmutated majesty through all periods of war and desolation, and still

moving and breathing of Olympus, with grace in every limb, and divinity on his brow: and there lies the Theseus, or a figure so called, and perhaps erroneously; wanting the face, wanting the hands, and wanting the feet; eaten by time and tempest to the bone; flayed of all external beauty, and nothing left but the mass of the statue; expressing nothing, and valuable only to artists. I cannot understand by what singularity of reasoning Sir Thomas prefers what he says he does not understand to a statue which speaks to every schoolboy, and which is the most perfect and noble of all the productions of antiquity." Here, however, there seems to have been a misapprehension of Lawrence's meaning: the question was not as to the state of preservation, or the present value of the two statues as objects of immediate gratification to the eye, but as to the *styles* in which they were originally conceived and executed. The majority of our artists agreed with Lawrence in pronouncing the Theseus to have been a closer imitation of real nature than the Apollo. The question, in short, is exactly the old one between the *beau-idéal* and the *beau-naturel*; and as to the corroded surface and mutilated limbs of the Theseus, will any one say that the half-obliterated Cartoon of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper is not worth a score of the best pictures that glare annually from the walls of Somerset House? Moreover, the Apollo itself was, when first discovered, in a mutilated state.

The public honours showered upon Lawrence by *almost all nations*, might require a chapter to

themselves. They began to descend as soon as he had painted Alexander of Russia and his veterans, and continued till he had obtained as many titles as might have satisfied a Spaniard. In addition to the honour of knighthood here, and admission to the Academy of St. Luke in Rome, he became, in 1817, a member of the American Academy of the Fine Arts, where his name was enrolled with those of Napoleon and Lucien Buonaparte, West, Canova, Wilkie, and Raeburn. This honour Sir Thomas repaid by painting a full-length portrait of their countryman, Benjamin West; and West, in return, said of Sir Thomas, — "He is not a mere portrait painter: he has invention, taste, rich colouring, and a power of execution truly wonderful." The Academy of Florence, having heard that Lawrence had painted one of his finest portraits as a present to the American Society, instantly elected him a member of the first class: but Sir Thomas, probably penetrating the motive of their kindness, sent nothing. The Academy of Venice added theirs to the number in 1823; that of Bologna followed: and Turin conferred all the dignity it had to bestow, in 1826. He was, moreover, elected a member of the Imperial Academy at Vienna, and got the diploma of the Danish Academy, through the personal interposition of King Christian-Frederick. Finally, he was made a chevalier of the Legion of Honour, in France, on the 20th of January, 1825; the King of England giving him leave to wear the cross of the order.

All this accumulation of honours induced not

Sir Thomas to make any change in his scale of establishment; but neither, unhappily, did he make any alteration in the way of regulating his expenditure. The more he won, the more he wasted. Farington, once his monitor in money matters, was dead; what his income was he did not know; — what his outlay was, as little could he tell: and thus he went on, from day to day, and from year to year; accumulating half-finished paintings, and gathering together, at a vast outlay, all the drawings he could find of the old masters, — but never making one step to the realisation of an independent fortune.

Among the gentle sitters who came to his easel, there was a Mrs. Wolfe, wife of a Danish consul. She was young; she was beautiful; she had considerable taste in art and literature: had a soft low voice like Sir Thomas himself; and, having no domestic duties to perform, — for she lived apart from her husband, — had much leisure to bestow on others. This was rather a dangerous neighbour, for one who imagined that his heart was all tenderness, and who complained continually of the coldness or insensibility of the living generation of spinsters. The lady, it appears, soon took upon herself the task of condolence in the painter's entanglements of love; and as she had failed, either through her husband's fault or her own, in doing the duties of a wife, she thought herself, perhaps, the better adapted for discharging those of a friend in a pure platonic way. I know not what name she gave the artist in the voluminous correspondence which

passed between them; but he called her his Aspasia, and exclaimed, "Pericles! Pericles! Pericles!" It was, perhaps, in honour of this acquaintanceship that he designed a splendid picture, representing the building of the Parthenon, with Aspasia and Pericles superintending the rising structure, and directing the sculptors, and the workers in silver, and ivory, and gold. The language of his letters was too much in keeping with the conception of this picture, which he sketched but to lay aside. Passion with him seldom spoke the language of nature and feeling: what must the fair Dane have thought of epistles such as this? — "Triumphs of conquerors, and even the deeds of heroism that secure them, have a colder spectator in me, as man and artist, than can often be found. I would rather paint Satan bursting into tears, when collecting his ruined angels, than Achilles, radiant in his heavenly arms, mounting his chariot, defying his destiny when announced by miracle, and rushing on devoted Troy. And fallen Rome, with its declining sun, as it was once sweetly and pathetically painted by Claude, would be more delightful in anticipation than even in its full carnival, with its tapestries hung round St. Peter's, its illuminated dome, and magnificent fireworks from the castle of St. Angelo, with all the gorgeous accompaniments of processions and fêtes."


He descended, however, sometimes from these high places of epistolary musing, and spoke out his mind in the plainer language of a man of this world.

He complained to this fair confidant that, with

the rise of his fame, enemies had risen also, who readily perceived his faults, and would not see any of his virtues. He had always been liberal, he said, towards his competitors in the race of reputation ; disdained all selfish policy, all trickery of conduct, and desired to do nothing unworthy of a gentleman ; yet he had the pain to find himself suspected of seeking to create an unwarrantable power in the Academy, and of "forming his squad," so that every thing might be sacrificed to him ; and, in short, of being called the prime mover of all injustice shown to others. "He could readily," he remarked, "refute such calumnies, and bring their propagators to shame, but he doubted the wisdom of doing so ; for he might excite their hatred, which was more dreadful to him than envy. So little had he committed himself with them, that the hottest malecontents of the Academy were compelled to smile upon him, and treat him with at least external civility." Having given Mrs. Wolfe a peep at the Royal Academy, he desires her to look at his own studio, and sympathise in the sensations, professional and domestic, of its troubled inhabitant. "I have the cares of overwhelming business, and all its dissatisfactions," he observed, "together with the perplexing adjustment of those incumbrances that once so nearly ruined me. I am perpetually, too, mastered by my art ; and am as much enslaved by the picture I am painting, as if it had a personal existence, and obliged me to attend to it. I often throw down my pencils, saying, 'I shall do no more ;' and whilst wiping my hands I see the 'little more' that is wanted, and

instantly take them up again." He had a particular pride, he said, in the pictures he sent to far countries unacquainted with the higher works of art. The science of the picture would, indeed, be lost upon them; but, in time, some true critic, or great artist, might arise among them, who would feel its worth, and tell them it was a work of finished excellence. He never laboured with more care than he did for strangers whom he might never hear of again.

In his correspondence with this lady, he discussed many matters, — painting, poetry, and acting. He thus powerfully dashed off the head of Byron with his pen; I wish he had done it with the brush: — "Lavater's system never asserted its truth more forcibly than in Byron's countenance, in which you see all the character: its keen and rapid genius, its pale intelligence, its profligacy, and its bitterness; its original symmetry distorted by the passions; his laugh of mingled merriment and scorn; the forehead clear and open, the brow boldly prominent, the eyes bright and dissimilar, the nose finely cut, and the nostril acutely formed; the mouth well made, but wide, and contemptuous even in its smile, falling singularly at the corners, and its vindictive and disdainful expression heightened by the massive firmness of the chin, which springs at once from the centre of the full under lip; the hair dark and curling, but irregular in its growth: all this presents to you the poet and the man; and the general effect is heightened by a thin spare form, and, as you may have heard, by a deformity of limb." The beauteous dame did not approve of the



darker shades of this sketch. She worshipped Byron with all his faults, and repeated some of the tenderer passages of his poetry with taste and feeling.

The story of this Mrs. Wolfe fills more space than it can deserve to do, in a preceding biography of Lawrence. I am no ready believer in platronics, particularly where the man is a bachelor, and the lady is living separately from her husband; but at a time when she might have just as well remained in London, where alone she could meet Sir Thomas, Mrs. Wolfe retired to Wales; and this fact, with some other private circumstances within my knowledge, induces me to reject the story that their friendship was defiled by sensuality. I am willing, indeed, to believe, with a lady who knew him well, that

“ His love lay most in talking.”

That Lawrence was an accomplished gossip, his own account of his nine days' visit to Claremont would be quite enough to prove. He was commissioned, it seems, in 1817, to paint a second portrait of the Princess Charlotte; and, having set up his easel, and prepared his pallet publicly, he took up his pen privately, and gave a long minute detail of the doings of the Princess and her household. This was rather imprudent; for his business was with his brush. A portrait painter, or indeed any man, who is admitted to the privacies of any family, should consider himself as in a confidential capacity, and close his lips, and abstain from all private gossip. It is true that the

Princess, a kind-hearted young creature, had no secrets she wished concealed : but I question whether she would have liked to have her little innocent endearments with her husband related by a pen so minutely trifling as that of Mrs. Wolfe's correspondent. The chief blame, however, must be with those that first published what Lawrence wrote. "The Princess," says this chronicler of Claremont, "is wanting in elegance of deportment ; but has nothing of the hoiden, or that boisterous hilarity which has been ascribed to her. Her manner is frank and simple ; and, if she does nothing gracefully, she does every thing kindly. She loves and respects Prince Leopold, and is more in dread of his opinion than of his displeasure. Their mode of life is very regular : they breakfast together at eleven, at half-past twelve she sits to me, the Prince staying with her most of the time ; about three she leaves the painting-room to take an airing about the grounds in a low phaeton and ponies, the Prince walking by her side ; at five she comes in, and sits to me till seven ; dinner is then served ; after the dessert has appeared, the Prince and Princess retire to the drawing-room, whence we soon hear the piano-forte accompanying their voices." This is a pretty picture ; but it is only a "bit" of the large conversation piece which Sir Thomas sketched. His oil picture of the Princess was natural, and even graceful : there was nothing of the imputed Elizabeth about Charlotte : she had a gentle, an affectionate, and a domestic look, and would have sat

enthroned in all hearts had she lived. She purposed to present this picture to her husband on his birthday, but died before the time came.

The pencil of Lawrence was soon afterwards called from domestic employment to labour for the state. Napoleon had struck his last blow on his bloodiest field ; the sovereigns of Europe had despatched him to perish on his distant rock, and were holding holiday, in the mood of a brood of chickens no longer scared with the shadow of the eagle's wings. They had met at Aix-la-Chapelle, to arrange the affairs of the world ; and it was the pleasure of the Regent of England that his painter should hasten to the royal headquarters, and execute portraits of the principal personages for the gallery at Windsor. In order that he might appear in a style worthy of the first maritime power in Europe, a thousand a year was allowed him for contingent expenses. The portraits were to be painted at the usual price, and meantime advances were made upon them with most munificent liberality. When the Aix-la-Chapelle part of the commission should be completed, he engaged to go to Rome on the same conditions, and paint the Pope, and one or two of his cardinals.

Of those princes and rulers of the earth he now painted Francis, Emperor of Austria, Louis XVIII. and Charles X., successively kings of France, the Archduke Charles, Prince Metternich, General Tchernicheff, General Oubaroff, Baron Hardenberg, Count Nesselrode, Baron

Gentz, Earl Bathurst, the Earl of Liverpool, Robert Marquis of Londonderry, the Duke of Cambridge, and Mr. Canning. The whole collection of the *European* portraits which he painted for George IV., amounted in number to twenty-four. Concerning his labours on the looks of the eminent foreigners who sat to him at this time, Lawrence was very communicative in his correspondence; but it must be confessed that he was much too fond of setting down titles at all their length; of describing public entertainments; of noting the idle etiquette and diplomatic minutiae of courts and assemblies; he dazzles his distant friends with stars, and ribands, and orders, and introduces a thousand trifles beneath the notice of any body but a determined tire-woman.

It was the pleasure of the Emperor of Russia to be represented in the close green hussar uniform which he had worn at the battle of Leipsic, and, moreover, he chose his own posture — the least imperial of any posture in which a man could be painted. His close green dress, his round cropped head, and his stooping position, all unite against him. The artist allowed him, of course, to have his own high will; and the portrait has suffered accordingly. The Emperor of Austria allowed Lawrence to choose his posture, and the picture is a masterpiece in every respect: the features any thing but good, but the expression mild, and the whole air that of a paternal monarch. The head of the Archduke Charles is that of a fine, eager, soldier-like, undismayed man. "The Emperor Francis," said the painter,

“ has a face, when speaking, of benevolence itself, and that expression I have been happy enough to catch. The King of Prussia is taller than either, but with more reserve of manner ; he has good features, and is of a sincere and generous nature.” The Emperor of Austria gave him a superb diamond ring ; the King of Prussia gave him another, with his initials in the centre. These were proud days for Lawrence, and he was not insensible of them. Emperors praised, empresses flattered, kings made presents, and all manner of courtly commendations descended upon the man who had the looks of monarchs in his power, as much as ever Napoleon had their thrones.

From Aix-la-Chapelle Lawrence went to Vienna to paint the portrait of Schwartzemberg, and other imperial generals. He admired the emperor's gallery, and in particular the Theodosius of Rubens, touched upon by Vandyke, and the better for every touch. Count Capo d'Istrias was the best portrait which he painted there, and the head of young Napoleon the prettiest drawing. His pencil gave great satisfaction ; and the artist himself was popular. He rose early, and laboured hard and late, and was often much exhausted. Sir Thomas wrote long letters upon balls and parties, and the looks of great men ; but though he visited the Gallery of the Belvedere four times, he has not spared us more than one remark ; nor has he said one word about the state of art in Austria. He packed up all his painting apparatus, and, on the 3d of May, 1819, departed for Rome.

It was between six and seven o'clock in a fine

clear morning that he first saw the dome of St. Peter's: he drove right into the heart of this "Niobe of nations," and, looking around, was surprised to see the city so small, and all its architecture on a scale much below what his imagination had pictured. "Tell Thomson and Howard," said he, "that I found Rome small; but if they are indignant at this, tell them the injustice has been amply punished; for I am at this moment overpowered with its immensity and grandeur." He visited the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican; and, having mused over their beauties, declared, that when endeavouring to judge between Michael Angelo and Raphael, the former bore down upon him with the force of lightning. "Truth and elegance could not withstand the sublime. There was something so lofty and abstracted in those deities of intellect with which Angelo had peopled the Sistine Chapel, which converted the noblest personages of Raphael's drama into an audience silent and awe-struck. Raphael never produced aught equal to the Adam and Eve of Michael Angelo. Though the latter is the mother of mankind, there is nothing heavy or masculine; all is elegant as the lines of the finest flower." The remains of the early grandeur of Rome began, as his imagination became less excited, to appear in their proper hue and dimensions. All was on a vast scale, and conveyed such an idea of power, and habitual notions of the magnificent and great, that it appeared more the work of a higher scale of being than of man. The very pavement seemed laid by a race of giants. If he was pleased with the works of the

dead, he was equally pleased with the attentions of the living. The Pope, Cardinal Gonsalvi, and the eminent Canova, all united in honouring the distinguished Englishman.

Pius VII., a mild old man, sat for his portrait first. He was introduced to His Holiness in a small closet in the Quirinal Palace; made his obeisance by bending the knee, and was then left alone with him. "He has a fine countenance," said Lawrence; "stoops a little; with a firm yet sweet-toned voice, and, as I believe, is within a year or two of eighty; and through all the storms of the past he retains the jet black of his hair." The old man disliked to speak French, perhaps from remembering his captivity; and he loved to speak English, of which he knew but little, from a sense of the kindness of that nation towards him. Cardinal Gonsalvi, the Pitt of Rome, as the painter not inaptly called him, absolutely delighted Lawrence. "He is," says the painter, "one of the finest subjects for a picture that I ever had, — a countenance of powerful intellect, and great symmetry: his manners but too gracious: the expression of every wish was pressed upon me, and the utterance of every complaint." Amid all this complaisance and honour, he could not but feel that he was but the more set up as a mark for envy to shoot her shafts at; and he cautioned a friend to whom he unbosomed himself how he talked in London of his labours and honours abroad. "Your knowledge of human nature," said he, "will tell you how much of prosperity is to be veiled, if we would have any but one's best friends sympathise in it." His portrait of Cæ-

dinal Gonsalvi is by far the finest of all the works which he painted during this long journey : the back ground is all clear Italian nature, and the figure which it relieves, and projects, as it were, into the air, is all mental power, and that beauty which belongs to thought. Nor is the picture of the Pope much inferior. The painter seems to have been inspired by the air of Rome, and the presence of the sublime creations of art around.

He who admired the sublime and severe Michael Angelo could not have much sympathy to spare for the soft and graceful Canova ; and accordingly we find little or no praise bestowed upon the works of that eminent master. The portrait of the Italian Phidias, as he was called, which Lawrence had done hastily in England, he repainted, more at his leisure, in Rome ; and with such skill did he seize the manly features of the swarthy Italian, and manage the crimson velvet, the damask, the gold, and the marble, which he lavished on the picture, that thousands, it is said, crowded to see it. Lawrence, with good taste, presented this fine work to the Pope. "It may be cited," says a person then in Rome, "as the most poetical, elegant, enthusiastic delineation of acute genius, without flattery, that has ever been executed. Its animation is beyond all praise. 'Per Baccho, che uomo è questo !' I heard Canova cry out when it was mentioned." The deep clear colouring of the head, and the manliness of the expression, render it one of the finest pictures of modern times. Lawrence avoids instituting any comparisons between Canova and Michael Angelo : he was, however, much de-

lighted with the famous Venus, for which Napoleon's fair and frail sister, Pauline, is said to have been the model. The statue was displayed by torchlight, — a mode which shows the lucid brilliancy of the marble, conceals such spots or faint veins as nature may have mingled with its formation, and affords such strong and changeable light and shade as sculpture in a milk-white material requires.

Amid all the splendour of art at Rome, his heart and thoughts often went back to England. All he saw, and he saw much ; all he admired, and that was not limited, could not lower Reynolds in his estimation ; nay, his love of his works seemed to increase daily : and though he still considered Michael Angelo as the head of all that was sublime, he looked upon Raphael, Correggio, Titian, and Reynolds, as the gods in art at whose shrines he should hereafter bend. " How fine," he exclaimed, " was our Sir Joshua ! How we know him now, when we see the sources of his greatness, and remember how often he surpassed their usual labours ; and in his own country, and in Europe, against prejudice and ignorance how firmly and alone he stood ! " Of Turner, too, though an opponent to him in the Academy, he spoke in terms of no ordinary praise. " Turner should come to Rome : he has an elegance, and often a greatness of invention, which wants a scene like this."

After remaining much longer in Italy than he intended, and consequently seeing more works of genius than he had expected, he returned to England, having left behind him, wherever he went,

admiration of his talents, and respect for his character and manners. The following works were, over and above the portraits of sovereigns and chiefs, the fruit of his foreign tour : — 1. The Archduchess, wife of the Archduke Charles ; 2. Princess Metternich ; 3. Child of the Archduke ; 4. Child of Count Fries : these were in oil. His drawings were : — 1. Princess Rosamoffsky ; 2. Countess Thurskeim ; 3. Madame Sauren ; 4. Lady Meade ; 5. Princess Lichnowsky ; 6. Mademoiselle Ricci ; 7. Countess Esterhazy ; 8. Count Esterhazy ; 9. The younger Prince Schwartzenberg.

Lawrence loved afterwards to recall Rome to his memory : it is thus he writes in 1828, to a young painter, then residing in the Eternal City, whose powers he admired : — “ You inform me that you have been making sketches of the peasantry, their costumes, &c. &c. You are right in keeping up this attention to the human figure, since it will not only be a great advantage to the introduction of it in your landscapes, but from the increased difficulty of its study it will exceedingly enlarge your power of copying inanimate nature. The best historical painters have always been good painters of landscape ; and, perhaps, there are examples in Titian of a greater style in that department of art than can be found in the Poussins. I would add Claude, but that he is so exclusively devoted to the beautiful (or to that species of grandeur united to it), as not properly to have a place in the comparison. I am now about to ask you to employ your genius in landscape for me. If the evenings are still of the

same beautiful serenity which I remember, will you give one of their happiest effects to a general view from the front terrace of San Pietro, in Montorio. I used often to drive up there for the delighted admiration which the grand expansion of that scenery so constantly excited. It reminded me of Milton's fine description of Rome in the 'Paradise Regained.' A faithful delineation of that scene, touched with your usual finishing and pure taste, would be much valued by me, and, I need not say, possessed by me at your own price. Do not, however, let me fetter you by this commission, nor, above all, break in upon the rational happiness of your stay at Rome. Be free as air in your choice of subject, so that you employ your talents; and do not lose this spring-time of your life, which, from your present residence, will hereafter appear its happiest epoch." On the same subject, to the same painter, he afterwards writes: — "You will oblige me much by executing my little commission for me: your powers are now in their youthful vigour; and there is a truth, delicacy, and refinement in your drawings, that, except in our greatest artist, I have seen in no other. From my own recollection, a sunset or evening is the finest moment of that glorious scene.

< Sir Thomas was something more than eighteen months away on this foreign expedition, for he did not arrive in England till the 20th of March, 1820. Events of some importance had occurred in his absence. George the Third was dead; and George the Fourth, the most munificent patron of art since Charles the First, reigned in his

stead. Benjamin West, too, the President of the Royal Academy, had expired, full of years and honours ; and the first intimation which he received of this event was, that he was to be elected in his place. The King welcomed him back, and was grateful for the treasures which he brought. The Royal Academy also welcomed him ; and, when he took the chair among his brethren, there were few who did not acknowledge, that, for reputation in art, for manners, and for all those acquirements which give a lustre to station, the choice could not have been amended. Even Fuseli, who had such fine taste as seldom to be satisfied with any thing, growled out his approbation in these words :—“ Well, well ! since *they* must have a face-painter to reign over them, let them take Lawrence ; he can, at least, paint eyes ! ” Sir Thomas, himself, received the information with moderate rapture, and said, — “ There are others better qualified to be President. I shall, however, discharge the duties as well and wisely as I can. I shall be true to the Academy ; and, in my intentions, just and impartial.” The King, in giving his sanction to the choice of the Academicians, added a gold chain and medal of himself, inscribed thus : — “ From His Majesty, George IV., to the President of the Royal Academy.” The elevation of Lawrence gave general satisfaction. His genius could not be disputed ; but, in truth, genius is not the first requisite for such a place. The great object is to find a man of the world, and a gentleman, — one acquainted with the etiquette of the station, — a

master of his temper and his tongue — prudent, sagacious, sensible, and conciliatory.

His station now enabled Lawrence, more than before, to befriend youthful talent ; and his advice, his patronage, and his purse, were ever ready at its call. His advice, of which he was profuse, was eagerly courted by all who imagined themselves skilful enough to master his trick of colour and character, by which he had risen so high. His protection was desired by many who, mistrusting their own strength, sought distinction by being reckoned amongst his followers ; and his purse was ever in the hands of a swarm of those unprincipled adventurers who care not what hand feeds them, so they be fed. It is said, that when money was in his pocket, he dealt it freely among all applicants, — whether mendicant artists, or importunate creditors ; and that some of the former found, when they opened his sealed envelope, that, instead of the five pounds which they had solicited, they had obtained fifty. To supply this daily drain upon his income, he was driven to become importunate in money matters himself. Having received one moiety of the price for a portrait, he was frequently obliged to apply for the other before the work was done ; and his correspondence with Sir Robert Peel, the greatest patron, under a prince, the painter ever had, is chiefly remarkable for the neat way in which he plays the politician about payment, and solicits the price before the appearance of the picture. He frequently alludes to his utter carelessness in money matters, and seems willing to think it a symptom of something high-souled, and

more than commonly intellectual : and so it was, had he contented himself with only squandering his income ; but a man who plunges into debt, that he may indulge his generosity of nature, is in danger of being liberal at the expense of others. It is, however, my duty to add, that I could point out various instances, in which Lawrence's natural delicacy of feeling made him decline to receive money, which was unquestionably his due.

So much was the President influenced with a wish to befriend the youthful and the deserving in art, that he proposed converting his house into a sort of private academy, to which pupils might resort for study and instruction. This might have been a beneficial arrangement. His time, much wasted in accidental conversations, and unexpected interviews, would, when distributed with prudence among the students, have left him as much leisure as ever for his pencil ; and, moreover, much of his own subordinate work might have been done by the pupils whom his advice was befriending. From this plan probably he expected to rear up a school of his own. He was heard to talk with enthusiasm of what might be done by the genius of one "superior disciple" or two ; of the society which it would bring him : and he went so far as to consult Smirke, the architect, concerning the transformation of his house into a series of studios and galleries. But many a plan looks feasible on paper, or in conversation, which cannot be carried into effect. The change proposed was very expensive, and required time. Money, with Lawrence, could not be had without

labour; and how was he to work when the bricklayers and carpenters were in his house? besides, time with him was money, and so could not be spared. The plan was relinquished, and not without a struggle.

We know not what the worth of his instructions might have been, when he had the pallet on his thumb, the pencil in his hand, and his pupil and canvass beside him; but it was generally allowed that little could be learned from the addresses, which, as President, he was obliged to deliver, along with the medals, annually, to the students. He was too fond of flowery language; and wrote and spoke in a style far too fine and diplomatic for instruction. Some of his remarks are, nevertheless, worthy of remembrance. "Your own good taste," he says to the students, "will remind you, that we are to judge of works by the *presence* of beauties, not by the absence of defects; and that, even if it fully reached the faultlessness of the character, the picture which should exhibit only the 'coldly correct' would with difficulty obtain our sanction. As nothing can compensate for the entire want of original power, so the superior value we assign to it will command our decision in its favour, where considerable ability is not distant. Your judges are but students of a higher form. The obstacles we have ourselves to encounter remind us of the difficulties that await you; and we limit our expectations of your success by the uncertainty of our own. It is a part of the triumph of our art, that it is slow in progress; and that, although there are frequent ex-

amples of its youthful promise, there are none of youthful excellence. Even the early paintings of Raphael bear no comparison, in finished merit, with the juvenile productions of the poet — with those of our own country, Milton, Pope, and Cowley."

"I may say with safety," writes a now well-known painter, "that Sir Thomas Lawrence was one of the best friends I ever had. I found him at all times most ready and liberal in his advice and visits; and when the oppressive number of his engagements would not allow him to go out of the house, he would always see the humblest student at home. I had the pleasure of making him a great number of drawings in water colours — always sketches done on the spot; and I know he frequently conferred this honour upon me, more to assist and encourage my exertions than from any wish to possess the drawings themselves: and for all I did for him in this way he paid me at the moment, and always handsomely; generally more than any one else who encouraged me. He never lost an opportunity of recommending my drawings and paintings among his distinguished friends; and I am even now feeling the effects of this generosity."

When he gave instructions to the students, he privately intimated to some of the most promising that they might visit his house, and look at the collection which he had made from masters ancient and modern. Well might Lawrence say his collection was unequalled in Europe. Besides the cartoons of Da Vinci, and drawings by Rembrandt and Rubens, and

other great masters, he possessed one hundred and twenty first rate drawings by Michael Angelo, and upwards of two hundred by Raphael. These are the parent drawings of the most famous finished paintings: they have in them what no painting can teach, — the workings of the mind, the birth of the design, and its slow growth from incomplete conception to the highest excellence and beauty. On this splendid collection he had expended much time, and so much money, that, though he himself valued it at twenty thousand pounds, his friends imagined it could not have cost him less than fifty thousand; and, indeed, they did not hesitate to ascribe to his love of gathering such rarities all the pecuniary difficulties under which he laboured. I cannot, however, persuade myself that it cost him so dear. Numbers were given to him; numbers were obtained at moderate prices; and though he certainly paid large prices for some, he was probably near the truth in the sum which he mentioned.

Of his admiration for these relics of the old masters, we find abundant proof in his letters to Mrs. Forster, the accomplished daughter of Banks the sculptor, who inherited her father's collection of drawings. "I can truly say" — thus writes Lawrence — "that, from the earliest days of my youth, I might almost have said childhood, those relics of the great masters have had attractions for me: and at fourteen, the study of the large prints of Georgio Mantuano, from Michael Angelo, led me to make drawings of colossal size from *Paradise Lost*; in which, unless I greatly err, I should even now find some degree of merit.

The drawings have arrived safe. The three which perhaps I admire most, are, a drawing of a couple of Torsos, by Michael Angelo, with some of his writing; a drawing (profile) of a female head with pen, by Raphael, with, at the further side of the drawing, a study in chalk of drapery. These, with a sheet of limbs by Michael Angelo, are what I chiefly *like*—covet not being a word in our vocabulary. A very good drawing is assigned to Titian, which, I believe, is by Annibal Carracci. Several of the drawings are very interesting. I have forgotten to mention sooner a drawing in heads with red chalk, by Michael Angelo, which I like very much, and a small drawing by Raphael of a virgin and child. Drawings by Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Parmegiano, are now become very scarce. There are some drawings of theirs here of the finest character; but all are not, I apprehend, by those great masters that are marked." He caused tracings to be made of all those fine works, placed them in his collection, and returned the originals. I know not whether his gentle hint about what he *liked* but dared not *covet*, had any influence on the proprietress. He thus writes to her:—"I wish that the one talent which I possess could, by any one of its efforts, bribe you to send me the remainder of the drawings (the dangers of the sea were dreaded). I would, too proud to have it in your possession, send you a drawing or picture by me not exceeding the dimensions of my Satan, which would be rather inconvenient for your boudoir. I would even accompany it with bad verse, and that is the

very rarest thing that I ever inflict upon my friends. You see in this the genuine spirit of self-sacrifice that this selfish craving has excited in me." Thus adjured, Mrs. Forster complied ; and before she could pack up the drawings the following letter reached her : — " I will not suffer a post to elapse without thanking you for your kind delightful letter, and expressing the esteem I feel for so amiable a nature. You mention your intended selection. Beware of its being too select. If you should leave out a Michael Angelo when you think it an Ostade — a Raphael, when you believe it to be a Teniers ! Recollect that Rembrandt comes within my circle of the great, and that I endure the sight of a Parmegiano and Claude. Would we could have the sight, at this moment (Nov. 31.), of the skies of the latter ! But all is gloom here, except the mind, from which many of its clouds have been dispersed by your letter, and by the revival of a father's genius in his daughter's accomplishments and goodness." In acknowledgment of Mrs. Forster's kindness, he presented her with a very fine drawing of her daughter ; and sent along with it a sketch made when he was a child, with " Thomas Lawrence, Devizes," written under it ; and on one side, " Done when three *weeks* old, I believe." Nor did his memory of the obligation end here. The Reverend Mr. Forster died ; and when Sir Thomas was informed that his widow was about to publish two volumes of his sermons, he wrote and enclosed fifty pounds, the amount, he said, of subscriptions for the work, which he had obtained among his friends : but when the names

of the subscribers were requested, that the books might be forwarded, he gave only two or three, saying he had lost the rest, and begged to be forgiven for his carelessness. In this delicate manner he aided one every way worthy.

He was now at the full height of professional and personal reputation, and all that he had to fear was the rising of some new star in the firmament of art, to wile away his fair and fickle customers. In manliness he had rivals ; in loveliness none. It was during those days of perhaps painful popularity that Lord Byron thus took note of him : — “ Jan. 5. 1821. — The same evening I met Lawrence, the painter, and heard one of Lord Grey’s daughters play on the harp so modestly and ingeniously that she looked music. I would rather have had my talk with Lawrence, who talked delightfully, and heard the girl, than have had all the fame of Moore and me put together. The only pleasure of fame is, that it paves the way to pleasure ; and the more intellectual, the better for the pleasure and for us too.” Lawrence, however, knew how to be silent when the occasion called for deferential respect. I dined along with him and Sir Walter Scott at the table of the venerable Dr. Hughes. He said little, and seemed chiefly anxious to hear the great poet, who certainly spoke in a way to charm every ear. The painter objected, in a most gentle way, to persons criticising works of art who were not themselves artists. “ Nay,” said the poet ; “ consider, art professes but to be a better sort of nature ; and, as such, appeals to the taste of the

world. surely, therefore, a wise man of the world may judge its worth, and feel its sentiment, though he cannot produce it. He may not know how it is produced; yet I see not but that he may estimate its beauty." Sir Thomas smiled, and said, "Certainly." The conversation took another turn.

Lawrence was at this period painting portraits of distinguished persons for the gallery of Sir Robert Peel, whose wish it was to have the heads of the chief men of his own times in arts, arms, and literature. The painter died before all this was accomplished: but he lived long enough to finish many noble paintings, fourteen I believe in all. The chief of these are the Duke of Wellington, Canning, the Earl of Aberdeen, Mr. Huskisson, Lord Eldon, Lord Stowell, Sir Robert Peel, and Southey. Sir Walter Scott, Chantrey, and others, were to have been added, but it was otherwise fated. In the full lengths of Lawrence there is less of true nature in the posture than of fine character in the face. I am not sure that I ever saw one of them wholly free from affectation. Canning holds up his closed hand in the attitude of passionately haranguing; but introducing the seats for other senators, left blank, was a fault both in taste and in *fact*, — for Canning never spoke to empty benches. When I saw it first, there was a white handkerchief waving in the lifted hand; but this he had the good sense to rub out. Southey is seated at the foot of one of his Cumberland crags, with one knee laid over the other, and the hands between. On my asking

the poet how he came to be painted in such a Jaques-like position, he said, "Why, seeing me, as I sat cross-legged, place my hands on one knee and under the other, he asked me 'if that was the way in which I was sometimes accustomed to sit.' I smiled, and confessed to it; upon which, Lawrence transferring the brush to his pallet hand, slapt his thigh, and said with a look of great satisfaction, 'Then I'll have it!'" The face is very like, but it wants that fine expression of eye, which made Byron, in one of his honest moods, pronounce the Laureate the most epic looking of all living bards. The most exquisite, however, of all the paintings in Sir Robert's collection is, the portrait of Lady Peel herself, in a hat and feather; painted unquestionably as a companion to the far-famed Chapeau de Paille of Rubens, but surpassing it in modest domestic loveliness, and rivalling it even in the rich harmony of its colouring. When I looked at this and the others hung round the walls, I could not help thinking with Burns, —

"His 'prentice han' he tried on man,
And then he made the lasses!"

The names and titles of the fair and noble ladies, whom he painted during the last ten years of his life, would fill pages. On their looks his fame will chiefly depend: they merit therefore a fuller notice than what a mere catalogue exhibits. I shall name them as he painted them: —1. Mrs. Baring and Children; 2. Lady Louisa Lambton (now Lady Durham); 3. Viscountess Pollington (now Countess of Mexborough) and Child; 4. The Countess of Blesinton; 5. The Countess of Jersey;

6. Duchess of Gloucester; 7. Mrs. Harford; 8. Princess Sophia; 9. Lady Vallecourt; 10. Marchioness of Lansdowne; 11. Hon. Mrs. Hope (now Lady Beresford); 12. Viscountess Melville; 13. Miss Croker; 14. Lady Lyndhurst; 15. Miss Peel; 16. Countess Gower and her Daughter; 17. Marchioness of Londonderry and her Son; 18. Lady Georgiana Agar Ellis (now Lady Dover), and her Son; 19. Miss Macdonald; 20. Duchess of Richmond; 21. Marchioness of Salisbury; 22. Mrs. Locke; 23. Lady Belfast; 24. Donna Maria de Gloria; 25. Miss Murray. Of these the most exquisitely lovely were the maternal portraits. A young mother, with her child on her knee, is the finest of all earth's visions, and well, and with a magic beauty, has Lawrence endowed some of his. The Countess Gower (now Marchioness of Stafford) and her fair-haired Child, Lady Georgiana Agar Ellis and Child, and the Marchioness of Londonderry and her Son, are blameless things: the eyes of the mothers are beaming with love, and those of the children with affection and health. Of the single figures, that of Miss Croker (now Mrs. Barrow) is all airiness and grace: men stood before it in a half circle, admiring its loveliness, in the Exhibition. That of Lady Blesinton, too, is finely painted. Lord Byron was induced to lift up his voice in its praise — but not with his usual inspiration: —

“ Were I now as I was, I had sung
What Lawrence has painted so well;
But the strain would expire on my tongue,
And the theme is too soft for my shell.”

" I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead :
What I loved I now merely admire,
And my heart is as grey as my head.

" Let the young and the brilliant aspire
To sing what I gaze on in vain,
For sorrow has torn from my lyre
The string which was worthy the strain."

Lawrence, however, failed occasionally even when he had the finest subjects. His "Lady Lyndhurst" was one striking instance of this, and his "Lady Salisbury" another.

Of sterner subjects we must now speak ; and, in my opinion, the pencil which laid the lily and the rose on the ladies with a softness which rivalled the hand of nature, was less successful with the deeper hues and severer aspect of man. It would seem, nevertheless, that few were of that opinion, for male sitters crowded to him more and more ; and amongst them were some of the most accomplished men of the three kingdoms. The list of his exhibited pictures alone is large, and among these the men of rank and genius are numerous. 1. John Abernethy, Surgeon ; 2. Sir William Grant, Master of the Rolls ; 3. Marquis of Londonderry (again) ; 4. Sir Humphry Davy ; 5. Benjamin West ; 6. Canning (again) ; 7. Earl of Aberdeen ; 8. Lord Stowell (again) ; 9. Duke of Wellington (once again) ; 10. Croker ; 11. Earl of Liverpool ; 12. Sir Walter Scott ; 13. Earl Grey ; 14. John Nash ; 15. Sir Astley Cooper, Surgeon ; 16. Earl of Eldon ; 17. Lord Durham ;

18. Thomas Campbell; 19. Thomas Moore; 20. Henry Brougham; 21. John Soane; 22. Henry Fuseli; 23. Sir Thomas Lawrence. Of these four-and-twenty portraits, the one most to our liking is that of John Wilson Croker; it is the express image of the man; — shrewd, keen, sarcastic, and intellectual, the eye seems to look through one. His Sir Walter Scott has also been much praised: it is certainly very like, but wants the manly massive vigour of the heads of the same illustrious poet by Raeburn. When I saw it first, the head alone was finished, all the surrounding ground was dark, and I thought it much more like than when the shoulders and body were added. "Tell Lawrence," said an artist of high name, "to let the portrait of your friend Scott stand as it is; it is full of character and mental vigour, all of which he will diminish if he paints the body. The poet's frame, as *he will paint it*, will pull the sentiment out of the face." The head of Campbell cost the painter some pains; the changing expression of his mouth, which puzzled others, was fixed at last in his true character by the hand of Lawrence; and the head of Moore, with its smart and sensitive look, was hit off with equal happiness. This picture, done for Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street, was, I believe, his very last labour. Fuseli's head was left unfinished; it had much of the flighty, imaginative, and discontented expression of the original; — the horrent hair, and the eye that no outline could please since the days of Michael Angelo, marked out the man amid the multitude of Sir Thomas's incomplete likenesses. His Six

Humphry Davy was less happy ; it has the lineaments, but not the strength of the man. Perhaps Davy would have been better done had he sat later in life. Soane was old enough ; indeed he was grown too feeble ; but we are glad to get the portrait of a man of genius upon any terms. Brougham is good ; with this head the painter was sorely puzzled ; it was young, at least not old, but came not within the academic line of manly beauty ; and the expression — a compound of sneer, sarcasm, unbounded wit, and of eloquence that knows no limit, was something at once new and difficult. The portrait of Lord Durham is, perhaps, one of the best : the colouring is deep and vivid, and the expression full of manliness. His own portrait is the least fortunate of any of his latter works ; moreover it is unfinished. So much was his likeness in request, that at one and the same time the King, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Francis Leveson Gower, and the city of Bristol, were candidates for the first from the easel. It was purchased after his death by the Earl of Chesterfield, at the ransom of 470 guineas.

Lawrence also found leisure to paint several children ; but if he excelled Reynolds in his female fascinations, he was far from equalling him in that innocent glee, and unaffected loveliness of look, which belong to boys and girls. The first President of the Academy, a childless man himself, outstripped all competition in these happy images of youth ; the last President, a childless man it is true, and a bachelor, was such a devoted worshipper of female beauty, that a touch diviner still was expected from his hand—but in vain.

He could paint them, indeed, in connection with maternal fondness — the child in the portrait of Lady Gower is a sweet creation — but then how much of the charm is owing to the presence of the mother? his single figures of children are comparative failures. The son of Lord Durham is a magnificent piece of colour; but there is a total absence of all simplicity. He has seated the boy on a rock, his legs and arms extended for the purpose of covering space, and his look fixed above, with all the upturned intensity of a Newton. “The little Red Riding Hood” comes nearer to the simplicity of nature, and the arch innocence of youth; and the “Children of Mr. Calmady” are certainly sweet and elegant. But these are rare exceptions at best. Lawrence can hardly ever stand a comparison with the children of Reynolds or Gainsborough.

Though his company was much in request, and he was generally to be found at the well-spread tables of public bodies, or people of rank and fashion, he did not allow the duties which he owed to courtesy or to patronage to interfere either with his professional pursuits, or his labours in the Academy. He did not, indeed, like Reynolds, whom he so ardently admired, venture to deliver a series of discourses on art, for the encouragement and instruction of the students. He, probably, thought that all was said that could well be said. He had made no discoveries in design; he had no mysteries in colour; he could tell them no more than what they knew; and he could not inoculate them with his genius, though he might excite their enthusiasm. Fuseli, too, might have

considered discourses similar to those of Reynolds as invading his province of Professor ; and, though his pencil could not do any thing to disturb the self-satisfaction of the President, it was perfectly certain that his pen and his wit might. Sir Thomas, therefore, prudently limited himself to his annual addresses to the students, and the *éloges* of those members of whom death, during the year, had deprived the Academy. That he thought not amiss of his addresses is evident from his having had some of them printed, and distributed among his friends.

If Lawrence is far from profound in his observations, he is always liberal and indulgent. Of West he speaks in terms of moderation ; but he perceives qualities in Sir Joshua which his works bear little evidence of. How the first eminent portrait painter of England was in "imagination all compact" with him of the Sistine, Lawrence must tell us : — "The link that united him to Michael Angelo was the sense of ideal greatness ; the noblest of all perceptions. It is this sublimity of thought that marks the first-rate genius : this impelling fancy, which has nowhere its defined form, yet every where its image ; and, while pursuing excellence too perfect to be attained, creates new beauty that cannot be surpassed ! It belongs only to that finer sagacity, which sees the essence of the beautiful or grand, divested of incongruous detail, and whose influence on the works of the great President is equally apparent in the calm, firm Defender of the National Rock (!!!), as in the Dying Queen of Virgil, or the grandeur of the

Tragic Muse." The last paragraph of this high-flown passage, alludes to Sir Joshua's Lord Heathfield, Queen Dido, and Mrs. Siddons: of the latter, he goes on to say, — "We may well imagine how gratifying were the contemplation and progress of that divine work; and, allowing much to anticipated fame, we may equally believe that part of the noble purpose was protection of the genius he admired, to affix to passing excellence an imperishable name; extend the justice withheld by the limits of her heart; and in the beauty of that unequalled countenance (fixed in the pale abstraction of some 'lofty vision, whose 'bodiless creations' are crowding on her view, and leave in suspended action the majestic form,) to verify the testimony of tradition; and, by the mental grandeur that invests her, record, in resistless evidence, the enchantment of her person." These words were meant for the eye of the actress, rather than the ears of unfledged artists, and no one will commend either their propriety or their modesty. "That the works, gentlemen," he continues, "of this illustrious man should have the strongest influence upon you, cannot be a matter of surprise; that the *largest* style of painting that, perhaps, is known, should captivate the scholar as it has charmed the teacher, is the most natural result that could have been produced in minds of sensibility and taste: but let it not mislead them."

Lawrence's letters are numerous; and some which treat of painting are valuable. To one of the most eminent of his brethren, then abroad, he thus wrote, in the close of the year 1827:

"You are not, perhaps, the first English artist who has seen the great works you enumerate; but you are the first on whose opinion I can implicitly rely, and who has been capable of discriminating their styles with such lucid accuracy. I will own to you that *three* of the four Raphaels rather disappointed me; there are parts very fine in the Christ bearing the Cross, but it is not in his high and pure style of composition. We see attitudes in the place of natural action, and either feebleness or exaggeration in the expressions. The Pearl equally disappointed me as it did you. The meeting between Mary and Elizabeth has little that is interesting, either in the design or execution. The simple symmetrical grandeur of the Madonna del Pache has more of the elevated feeling of the master than can be found in all the details of the others; and I confess I envied the French, then its supposed owners, the possession of that work. Should you possibly find time to write again to me from Spain, tell me what is the subject of that 'Correggio,' which is placed so high at the Escorial. The original of the Bacchanalians, by Titian, must indeed be a rich and fine work. The effect of the large picture of Charles the Fifth is, then, the same with, or of a lower tone, than the sketch in our friend's collection. I am glad that you admire so much the large work of the apotheosis of that monarch, of which, I know, we have often admired the sketch. Your criticism on the blue sky and draperies is exactly my own impression; *and the fault is so opposite to the uniform splen-*

dour or deep-toned harmony of Titian, that I have almost believed the tale, that those draperies, and their colour, formed part of the dream which is said to have suggested the picture. All praise and, at least, English gratitude be given to the monks for their tasteful indolence! How delightful must be the contemplation of those fine combinations of the pallet in their pure and undisturbed freshness; and how painful (were they not?) must have been the opposite feelings on your first view of the *Notte*, the *San Giorgio*, at *Dresden*! I am ignorant to which of those pictures you give the palm. My impression of Titian's *Last Supper* was moderated by a large copy of it; the sketch is, I dare say, to the artist's feelings, the more precious work. From the one picture by *Ribiera*, at *Naples*, I have been led to think you would find some grand severe specimens of his power and sentiment in *chiaro-scuro*, which *Carravaggio* never had. The picture I speak of was, I think, in the *San Martino* at *Naples*. Yes, I fully agree with you in the sympathy of our English pencil with that of *Velasquez*; but in all the objects and subjects of his pencil, it is the true philosophy of the art, the selection of essentials, of all which first and last strikes the eye and senses of the spectator. I shall now meet our friends on the 10th, with greater confidence: and if I find symptoms of complaint and dissatisfaction at the incompetency of their President, I shall reinstate myself in their good opinion by the introduction of your letter, and its evidence of your regard."

In the same interesting strain he addresses the

same distinguished brother, on the 10th of January, 1828: — “ It may be part of the happiness of your present existence to have lost all remembrance of the misery of a London life to those engaged in the daily toil of their profession, and linked by it (with some duties) to the just or fancied claims of its society. I want you to remember some part of this your past life, that you may the sooner forgive me for not immediately acquainting you with the result of my application to the Council of the Royal Academy to become subscribers, on your recommendation, to the series of engravings now in progress from the finest pictures of the Spanish school. I have the pleasure to tell you, that I am now furnished with their authority for requesting you to put down the Royal Academy of England as subscribers to this work.

“ How exceedingly interesting must that collection of pictures be, by so great a master, over which neglect has thrown its protecting mantle, and thus fortunately saved them from the havoc of repair ! In the latter days of Titian, he appears to have been singularly bold and fearless, dashing his colours on the canvass, with little systematic preparation : delighting in novel foreshortened views of the figure, in which (as seen from a low point of sight) he and Fuseli are the highest authorities, and, in some instances, losing sight (as perhaps in the apotheosis of Charles) of that sterner dignity of sense, which accompanies the grandeur of his St. Peter Martyr, and the family of the Pesaro. You find nothing of Mengs, to raise him in your estimation, over what he appears

in the ceilings of some of the smaller chambers of the Vatican. The mention of his ephemeral reputation, recalls the objects of his adoration and study, the San Georgio, and the Notte, at Dresden. On the whole, which do you consider the higher effort of power? I was going to say the most intellectual, but the phrase has its two applications: the one as expressing the highest effort of the reasoning faculties, and, therefore; strictly intellectual; the other as conveying that effusion—that emanation of genius, which the sacredness of the subject so imperiously demands. But we know the entirely different frame of mind with which the artist prepared himself for each: he came to the latter with the same awe; though not in the tones of sorrow with which Milton invokes the sacred groves when he has to lament his Lycidas, girding up his genius to the task; and it was then he might have answered as the poet to his friend, ‘You ask me what I am about—what are my present thoughts? My Diodati, let me whisper it in your ear. I think, so Heaven help me, of immortality—I plume my wings, and meditate a flight.’ This immortality, which when the powers that claim it are genuine and *consistent* is equally fame at the present moment, can be gained only by the addition of the original to the powerful and the true.”

He rejoiced in the success of the clever and the enthusiastic, and wrote them long letters of counsel and encouragement. The following is addressed to that young artist whom he requested to draw the view of Rome: it is dated the 9th of

March, 1829.—“ I need not tell you how sincerely I rejoice in your success: hitherto you have ‘ won your spurs by your own valour,’ however much the kindness of friendship may have cheered you in the contest. The painting of your figures last year convinced me of your increasing ability in the study of the human figure; and, unless you attempt the higher dramatic or epic style of composition, you already walk in perfect safety, and need fear no pit-fall in your path. I am anxious to see the picture you are now sending, of which I heard, last night, a very favourable opinion from Mr. Turner. There is a gentleman here who is desirous of having two small pictures of you, about the size of the *Boy and Girl*, at your own price and subject. He is not in the circles of fashion, but known to almost all our artists by his liberal patronage and gentlemanly conduct. His name is Vernon. Let me know that you undertake them for him. There are many competitors for your little picture of ‘ *The youthful Italian Lovers* ;’ but having your own authority for considering it to be Mr. Bailey’s, I retained it for him. Beautiful as your drawing of the same subject was, I preferred the picture. I am well acquainted with the talents and intelligence of Mr. Havell; if you now go to complete those sketches which were but slightly traced with him, and add to them the colour and effects of nature, your tour with a man of such known taste and knowledge of composition, whether beautiful or grand, will have been all gain, and the benefit lasting. I shall not fail to give your remembrances to Callcott, who will be much

gratified with the report of your success. You are fortunate in having still the society of Mr. Eastlake ; an advantage that cannot be too highly appreciated."

Another letter to the same artist, dated the 27th of March, 1829, is still more interesting : it is full of good counsel in professional matters, and shows the anxiety of the President for the improvement of the students. " Your drawings will, doubtless, be much admired ; but I prefer your picture, which I think very beautiful. You have rendered an incident in nature, which, though it ought always to be hallowed, is yet sometimes unpleasing in itself, and often grossly represented, with a delicacy and affection that make it deeply interesting and pathetic : you have likewise given the essential in such subjects,—beauty. You have taken great pains with your principal figure ; and the eyes are as well drawn as the other features of her sweet countenance : but in the two boys, the one on the ass and the other accosting him, the eyes are two dark blots, and ill-formed. Let this carelessness be soon impossible to you. In that sweet little picture, too, of last year, the boy was not looking quite in the girl's face. Be at the pains often to draw that feature : I can quote high authority for it : I have a sheet of eyes, drawn by Michael Angelo for some young painter, like yourself, whose genius had excited the friendly effort. Try, too, to get something of better character in your skies and distance. Do not be content with insipid fair Roman painting (this between ourselves). Clouds, it is true, are all softness ; but we have been too long accus-

tomed to see them touched with the *expression* of the pencil, to be content with their tame and spiritless representation. It is the same with your distances; they are very accurate, of true and sweet hues, but you do not *scumble* enough, nor give that fair zest of pencilling which is so exquisite in the first works of Claude and Turner. One thing is against you, viz. the coarseness of your canvass, which no quantity of colour could well subdue."

Few of his letters go so much into the detail of art; and it is seldom that his correspondence is so free from the frivolous and the complimentary. He very rarely wrote concerning the art of composition or the use of colours. When, however, in 1827, Burnet published his clever "Practical Hints on Colour in Painting," in which he questions the assertion of Reynolds, that the masses of light in a picture should always be of a warm mellow colour, yellow, red, or a yellowish white, and instances proofs to the contrary, both in art and nature, Lawrence thus vindicated, in his own gentle way, the opinion of Sir Joshua. "Agreeing with you in so many points, I still venture to differ from you in your question with Sir Joshua. Infinitely various as nature is, there are still two or three truths that limit her variety, or rather that limit art in the imitation of her. I should instance for one the ascendancy of white objects, which can never be departed from with impunity; and again, the union of colour with light. Masterly as the execution of that picture is, I always feel (a never changing impression on my eye), that the Blue Boy of Gainsborough is a difficulty

boldly combated, not conquered. The light blue drapery of the Virgin in the centre of the *Notte* is another instance, a check to the harmony of the celestial radiance round it."

During the last ten years of his life, he supplied the Exhibition with many fine works; and with none which could not bear comparison with the best of other academicians. He prided himself much on the portraits which he painted of George IV., and preferred one in his private dress to the others; yet the King was full-bodied, inclining to be corpulent, and, when painted in his tight close-bodied dress, looked ill at ease: his clothes in the picture fit so tight, that they seem to give him pain. Lawrence was a great flatterer. He lavished his summer colours upon autumn and on winter; and gave to declining years the vigour and the life of youth. He painted many heads which he desired not to exhibit, and some, which would have been worthy of any gallery, came hurried from his hands by the impatience of the proprietors: others, again, were forced into the Exhibition merely by the vanity of the subjects. The following portraits were willingly exhibited by the painter:— 1. Count Woronzow; 2. Duke of York (again); 3. Duke of Bedford; 4. Earl of Harewood; 5. Archbishop of York; 6. Lord Francis Conyngham; 7. Sir William Knighton; 8. Earl of Clanwilliam; 9. Duke of Devonshire; 10. Sir William Curtis; 11. Lord Bexley; 12. Lord Robert Manners; 13. Lord Francis Leveson Gower; 14. Richard Clarke, Chamberlain of London; 15. Duke of Clarence; 16. Sir Ralph James Woodford, Governor of Trinidad; 17.

Archbishop of Armagh; 18. Earl of Hardwicke; 19. John Angerstein, Esq.

Sir Thomas was now nigh sixty years of age; and if a widely diffused fame, honours at home and abroad, and a wide circle of distinguished and accomplished friends, could ensure happiness, he ought to have been one of the happiest of mankind. Outwardly he enjoyed the world, and the world enjoyed him. He was the companion of rank and wealth in all public places: he wrote perfumed billets full of studied compliments to ladies, and ladies smiled and spoke of the accomplished Sir Thomas. The King of England, allowed by all to be a fine judge, pronounced him a high-bred gentleman: the King of France, in addition to other honours, sent him a present of royal porcelain: the Irish Academy elected him an honorary member; and such faith was reposed in his pencil, that some one wished him to paint up or paint down—I forget which—the Catholic Claims. To lay the copestone upon all other honour, his native city voted him its freedom, in speeches indicating more a sense of his fame than a knowledge of his art; and what was even as remarkable as this owning of his genius by his native place, the opposition which he formerly complained of in the Royal Academy gradually grew smoother in its mood: gentle and persuasive manners at last prevailed.

There were, however, sore drawbacks upon all this felicity. Flaxman, whom he loved for his gentle manners and fine genius, was gone: so was Fuseli, a name which Lawrence evidently delighted in recalling, and never without giving an

instance of his friend's wit, his learning, or his genius. His brothers, too, whom he tenderly loved, were dead; and, a solitary man, he was left to reflect on the stays of which he had been deprived: his pecuniary difficulties were getting more and more perplexing from year to year, and from month to month; and, to crown all, for years before his death he had been internally admonished of gradual decay.

Outwardly he had something of the look of health; his fine frame continued erect, and his finer countenance retained its vivacity; but he began to feel that a little fatigued him; that he could not move without pain; while the utter confusion of his accounts, and the trouble which he had in making his income meet his outlay, pressed sorely on him, and between them occasioned that melancholy drooping of the spirit to which he was latterly liable. He had been deprived, too, of another friend, in whose company he once took much delight, and whose correspondence he eagerly cultivated, — I mean Mrs. Wolfe. This beautiful and accomplished lady, after moving in the London circles, and in the society of Sir Thomas's friends and relatives for some years, retired at last, as I have already mentioned, into a distant part of the country. Her voice from her solitude reached the artist amid the circles of fashion; it was one of melancholy and foreboding, and was answered by a heart that began to feel the vanity of all human things, that perceived the "sere and yellow leaf" was come, and felt as if the ground on which

he stood was beginning to shake. This lady fell ill of a fever, and died in the middle of the year 1829. Lawrence was deeply affected. He laid down his pencil, nor resumed it for nearly a month; nor did he hesitate to account for his sadness of spirit. "I have lost," he said, "a faithful and revered friend; one worthy, from genius, right principle, benevolence, and piety, to be the companion of the best."

He was still, it is said, exposed to the designs of the fair; but I am afraid that few will be inclined to pity him during those open or covert attacks, which it is said some were intrepid enough to make upon him, with the hope of conducting him to the altar. A young lady of beauty and accomplishments confidently requested a matron, one of the earliest and latest friends of the painter, to enquire what he meant by his soft and persuasive speeches; in a word, if he desired to marry her or not. When this was mentioned to Lawrence, he made answer, "Why, ay, I admired her once for her beauty and cleverness, and thought of marriage; but I soon discovered that she would not suit me as a wife, and ceased to pay her any attention. She has often pained me by her remonstrances and enquiries since; if women will go such lengths, who will pity them?" A man of mature years can have no excuse for tampering, however lightly, with the affections of any woman. One of his female defenders says he gave no wilful pain—never trifled with feelings to please his own vanity; and that, amidst all his soft looks, speeches, and billets, his views rarely went beyond the indulgence of a sort of romantic

civility, is more than probable; but he might have known that ladies, whether lovely or otherwise, are not apt to put figurative constructions on compliments and attentions. He was assailed by ladies in another way: one, lovely and vain, thought so well of her beauty, that she imagined Sir Thomas would rejoice in painting her head gratis. He extolled her person; "But, madam," said he, "I have ceased to paint for fame." Another, who had some skill in art, wrote an Amazonian letter, requesting admission for herself and other gentle students to study at the Academy. "Surely, sir," said she, "it is not for man's intellectual superiority alone that fair science has mounted her lofty throne, and derived all her strength and beauty. Examples of past and present days would leap from their hallowed shrines to plant a glorious wreath upon the brows of woman; and although we boast not the designating beard, the brawny sinew, nor possess minds formed like Artemisia and Semiramis, 'for councils deep and deeds of high enterprise,' yet our imaginations are vivid, our tastes capable of the highest refinement, and we only want your fostering care to become all that genius short of your own can aim at." When this letter was read to Fuseli, he exclaimed, "What a termagant! Mary Wolstonecroft is alive again!"

We have said that a change had been observed in the health of Lawrence. There was another change: many of his latter letters breathe of piety, and a respect for God's ordinances; and it is well known that some years before his

death his thoughts grew serious ; that he loved the conversation of devout men ; felt scruples about working on the Sabbath, which, in his earlier days, he had practised without concern ; and became almost constant in his attendance at church. Even in his correspondence, indeed, with Mrs. Wolfe, and that early, sentiments of a sober and godly nature occur not unfrequently ; and in his discussions with her concerning the merits of Byron and Milman, he uniformly bestows his praise on thoughts that are pious, and actions that are sublime. A man, it is true, may express a sense of what is devout and noble, without being pious himself ; but I am warranted in claiming for Sir Thomas something beyond a cold compliance with the external forms of religion : the man of the world became, a little through the admonition of declining health, and more from a spiritual feeling, an example to many in a wide city, where good example is greatly needed. I am not sure that he imagined his health was on the wane : the body feels what the spirit will not acknowledge ; and like a wearied traveller, seeks the softer and shadier side of the road. He drooped at his work ; he could not exert himself as had been his wont ; and the cause was declining strength, whatever he might think. At the dinner of the Artists' Fund, in 1829, to which he was a liberal contributor, when his health was drunk, and loudly cheered, he was moved more than had been usual to him : — " I am now advanced in life," he said, " and the time of decay is coming : but, *come when it will*, I hope to have the good

sense not to prolong the contest for fame with younger, and, perhaps, abler men. No self-love shall prevent me from retiring, and that cheerfully, to privacy; and I consider I shall do but an act of justice to others as well as mercy to myself."

Towards the close of the autumn of 1829, and more as the winter advanced, he was observed to look pale, to walk feebly, and to be overtaken with drowsiness in company. He complained that his eyes and forehead felt hot in the evenings; and he frequently relieved himself by bathing them in cold water. His sister Anne, whom he loved much, was dangerously ill during this period. He wrote almost every day, assuring her of his regard, and promising to go and see her as soon as his pressing engagements would allow him. He declined several invitations; but was induced to accept one from Sir Robert Peel, because in his house he looked upon himself as at home. Cheerful conversation with the accomplished baronet and his lady soothed his mind, he said, and made him forget that he was ailing. He dined there on Saturday, the 2d of January, 1830. He had been affected during the preceding night with sharp pains in the stomach. In the course of thirty years, he said, he had not passed such a miserable night. "I sat opposite to him at the table of Sir Robert Peel," said Washington Irving. "He seemed uneasy and restless; his eyes were wandering; he was pale as marble; the stamp of death seemed on him. He told me he felt ill; but he wished to bear himself up in the presence of those whom he so much esteemed as his exten-

tainers. He went away early." He was attended by Dr. Hall, and recovered so much that, on the Tuesday, he painted nearly an hour on the King's portrait, and even attended a meeting of a committee at the Athenæum Club House, where he gave his opinion on points of business in his usual way, but was observed to have a little difficulty in ascending the stair. Some of his friends remembered this afterwards, but they took no serious thought of it at the time. During the night of Wednesday, the 6th of January, he experienced a violent relapse. Sir Henry Hallford added his knowledge to that of Dr. Holland. He was bled; leeches were applied to his right side; he felt greatly relieved, and desired his friend, Miss Croft, who had hastened to attend him, not to be alarmed at the change of his looks. In the morning of the 7th, he took tea and toast: and was once more considered out of danger by all, save his physicians. He said his breathing was now free; and when his friend Mr. Keightly saw him in the evening, he said, "Read that to me — an article by Campbell the poet on the genius of Flaxman." As Mr. Keightly began to read, the sick man's countenance changed; he put his hand to Miss Croft's, pressed hers in an agitated way, and desired them to leave the room. They had not been gone many minutes when John, his servant, cried imploringly for help. On Keightly running up, he found Lawrence stretching himself out on the floor, having slipped down from his seat. His last words were, — "John, my good fellow, this is dying." He expired without a groan, and was buried with

many honours in St. Paul's cathedral, beside his eminent brethren Reynolds, Barry, and West. The Earl of Aberdeen, Earl Gower, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Dover, Sir George Murray, the Right Honourable J. W. Croker, Mr. Harte Davis, and Earl Clanwilliam, were pall-bearers. The carriages of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs went before the hearse; the whole members of the Royal Academy accompanied it; sixty-four empty coaches of noblemen and gentlemen followed; and the venerable Dr. Hughes read the burial service over the coffin, on the lid of which was inscribed, — " Sir Thomas Lawrence, Knt., LL. D., F. R. S., President of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, and Knight of the Royal French Order of the Legion of Honour, died 7th January, 1830, in the sixty-first year of his age."

Sir Thomas Lawrence was five feet nine inches high, with handsome limbs, a body finely proportioned, and a countenance open and noble. His head was bald, but so finely shaped, that the want of hair was a beauty. There was a winning sweetness in his smile; his voice was gentle and musical; and when he spoke, he moved his hand and head in accordance with the sentiments he uttered. His eyes were large and lustrous, and of such expression, as induced a lady of much taste to say, that their light was never tamed down by the gentler emotions, nor the polished suavities of conversation, into harmony with the mild character of his face; the light seemed to kindle still, and he could not put it out. His heartiest laughter was

considered so little ungraceful, that some one said, "his mirth may be set to music:" nor did the troubles and passions of life leave a stronger trace than a faint line or so on the brow. His conversation was easy and fluent; but in large companies he loved rather to be a listener than a speaker. He wished to sink and keep out of sight every claim of his own: he desired to send away all who approached him, well satisfied with themselves; and this applies to his portraits as well as to his manners. When at ease with his friends, he spoke with feeling, and even eloquence. He had an uncommonly quick perception of the ridiculous—and a turn for satire, which, it is said, even Fuseli learned to respect. "With his matured judgment," said one of the cleverest of his brethren, "he preserved all the enthusiasm of youth, and retained the habits and docility of a student even in his station of President."

"With all his genius," says an admirable judge, "Lawrence was not a person in whose society I could ever have delighted. As, however, he was the painter who pleased every body in his portraits, so was he the person who pleased every body in his manners, except those two or three who look rather to the grain than to the varnish."—"The character of his conversation," says another shrewd observer, "partook of that of his works: he often dwelt on minute circumstances; but they were handled with grace, and always illustrated the subject he was upon. There was a defensiveness about his manners to the world; a sort of holding back, a fastidious *modesty*, a too high polish, which equalised his

bearing to all, and perhaps wore the air of being somewhat artificial."

Concerning his addresses to the students, and his letters to his friends, much has been said. They have been extolled as works of polished beauty, and abounding with feeling, and gaiety, and grace. The first are brief and laboured, the second are voluminous and negligent; but the labour is not that of fine skill, nor the negligence the brave neglect of genius. On inspection, both letters and discourses will be found to resemble each other thoroughly in one thing, — the resolution to please; and in this he generally succeeded, for few can resist the insinuating flattery of a man of genius. If we look at his addresses as the offspring of a spirit kind and benevolent, willing to soothe, and anxious to gratify, they cannot be too much commended: for they are complimentary to the living, and humane to the dead. As the companions of his fame fell around him, he was called upon, as President, to pronounce something like a funeral oration. Nothing was said but what was true: but he took care to speak only that part of the truth that suited his own purpose. He did not characterise, but merely eulogise, West, Flaxman, — even Fuseli. I have called his letters negligent; I should have said as specimens of composition, for the sentiment is studied enough. "He seldom," said one of his friends, "answered a letter till some days had elapsed, and then he poured out a whole page of elaborate apologies." He bestowed a gift with the air of a man entreating a favour; he wrote himself down in

finitely your debtor in accepting an invitation to dine ; and when he penned a three-cornered billet to some fair sitter, he assumed the language of tenderness, often of homage, and did all but sign himself "despairing Thyrsis." I am not, however, sure, that the private letters of any man, at all events of any man who was not a professed author, are legitimate subjects of criticism.

That Lawrence gambled away his wealth in our London sinks of infamy was for a time strongly asserted — but this story has been completely disproved. To the testimony of friends we may add his own : — "I have neither been extravagant nor profligate in the use of money. Neither gaming, horses, curricule, expensive entertainments, nor secret sources of ruin from vulgar licentiousness have swept it from me." A friend of his, who had a spirit of observation as well as abundant opportunity, says, — "With honours and wealth flowing in upon him, he was, during the last years of his life, a depressed, a saddened, and a failing man. His talent brightened, indeed, and his honours increased to the last hour ; but the wealth, great as it was, was too little to meet the claims he had allowed himself to be involved in, and inadequate to afford his beneficence all his heart desired ; and — it is a pain to know — too scanty to extricate him, at times, from an immediate pressure for money. He had many friends, and no real enemies ; but it was his misfortune to have no confidential friend, with ability and influence enough to do that for him which incessant occupation deprived him of all courage to attempt."

To say that he carried the gains of his pencil to

the gaming-table, and squandered, among the "filth and feculence of the land," the price of works of beauty and talent, was, then, a gross calumny: but it is also true, that, by a species of generosity which may be called extravagance, he laid out much of his fortune on sketches, copies, and tracings, from the old masters—on drawings by the young or the undistinguished—and in presents to all who came with tales of sorrow and distress. I mean not to blame his taste, or arraign his benevolence. Many of those sketches and paintings are of great value, and many of those whom he relieved by his bounty were worthy of his sympathy; but his eyes should have been opened wider on the sadness of his own condition, and he ought to have dedicated the fruits of his genius to the equally charitable task of rescuing himself from the punctual creditor and the ravenous money-lender. He had not the power to say nay, either for his purse or his pencil. A lady, who had been liberal in her invectives against him, requested him to make some change in the portrait of her mother after her death. A friend, on reading the request, said, "Why should you waste your time on her; she who heaps many a scandal on you with witty and persevering malice?" He replied, with a smile,— "Oh, never mind; I know she does as you say: but nobody else can do what she wants, and I must do it for her;" and he did.

Of his methods of work, and his hours of study, something should be said. His journey and residence abroad led him to the practice of a purer and chaster style than his earlier works show: some original defects were exchanged

for qualities that told more with the world; yet, among the efforts of his youth there is, sometimes, an inspiring boldness, which promised more than his succeeding labours realised. He said, that had not Reynolds been opposed by Romney, whose success diminished his practice with the fashionable world, he would have painted few of his fine fancy pictures. The friend, to whom he made the remark, replied, — “And should a rival worthy of Lawrence arise, we might yet have works of genius from his hand worthy of his Kemble as Hamlet or Rolla, and his group of the Baring family.” He smiled, and said nothing. Of all the great colourists, he preferred, he said, those who *pronounced* their white in a positive manner; and he reckoned it a degeneracy in some of the Flemings, and Vandyke among them, that they reduced the pure white to a sort of grey. “The Venetians,” he observed, “made white tell distinct from all other tints; a perfect white.” This he himself acted upon in his very latest productions: in his earlier paintings he used white of a warm cream colour.

In describing the impressions which the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo made on him, he said, that, with all the perfections which the former possessed, there was a profoundness of thought and expression in the other that demanded deeper attention. “Had I been six times to see Raphael, I must have gone seven times to see Michael Angelo.” Before he went abroad, he used to say, “Why should I go to Italy to study; have we not Reynolds here?” He also *averred* that Sir Joshua excelled all other masters

save Rembrandt, the most powerful imitator of the effect of nature that art had ever produced. He loved, and he excelled in painting, fine mouths and dark eyes; and he took particular pleasure in painting an ear, the intricate and elegant drawing of which he said required mastery to imitate. "He appeared in painting," said a friend who knew much of his ways, "with the alacrity of one engaged in what to him was truly delightful. But he had two 'attentions.' If he enjoined a friend to read whilst he painted, that which he gave to the reader seemed his whole attention. I never knew him break in upon the reading for his own work, but often lay down the pencil to laugh or weep over the book. Yet there came, perhaps, a moment in which his intense gaze at, and study of, his subject, possessed him wholly; the next he dashed up to the canvass, and the effect was gone. To do, what he once understood, seemed the mere play of his hand; and only mechanically and rapidly making that out which his mind had previously settled. That manner of doing always exactly what he appeared to intend, rendered the progress of his picture a very interesting and instructive sight." He was capable of great exertion. On being asked for how many hours he had ever painted without ceasing, he said, thirty-seven; and that was on the portrait of Lord Thurlow. He began at seven in the morning, painted all day and all night, and all next day till eleven in the following night; "by this time," said he, "I could not distinguish one colour from another;

remember, too, I was standing or walking all the while, for I never paint sitting."

He could see at a great distance, and also quite close; the first aided him in catching the general expression, and the other in communicating those finer touches, those almost half invisible lines, to his finished drawings and paintings, which go in the gross to make up the excellence of the likeness. "That fineness of feeling," said one of his most gifted friends, "which made him so sensible to the slights and caresses of the world, probably gave him in his art a delicacy of thought and of touch scarce ever surpassed: making him alike sensible to the utmost refinements of nature in his own labours, as well as powerfully alive to any deficiency in them, in the works of others. This, however, which made so much of the charm of his art, with which he could seize, and give an interest to the scarcely visible irregularities of beauty, and touch the feathers, or the silver tissue, with a lightness which seemed to suspend them in the air itself, was in him, as it always must be with genius, accompanied by a strength where strength was wanted, which gave to all that was fine and delicate its true value. When once asked what he was doing, he said, 'All uncertainty—taking refuge in difficulties.'"

As a portrait-painter, his merits are of a high order. He has been called the second Reynolds; not from being an imitator of the *style* of that great master, but from possessing very largely the same singular power of expressing sentiment and feeling, and of giving beauty and often dig-

nity to his productions. He resembled him less in breadth and vigour than in the freedom and elegance of his attitudes, in his skilful personation of human thought, and in the exquisite grace and loveliness with which he inspired all that he touched. One age of the great men, and the courtly beauties of England, will live to posterity on the canvass of Reynolds. Another will do so on that of Lawrence.

There is much elegance, nay, vigour, in many of the male heads of Lawrence; and over most of them, and all his ladies, he sheds a natural splendour of colouring, which, like sunshine in dew, is as refreshing as lustrous. The mouths of his men, and the eyes of his women, are made only for eloquence and love. Of all his three hundred and odd exhibited portraits, there is, perhaps, not one that can be called common-place, either in character or in handling. Of these, forty are in the royal gallery, and some fourteen in the collection of Sir Robert Peel. The taste of the times suited his talent; the courtesy of his manners, and the politeness of his pencil, alike aided in his ascent. To him the present was every thing, and the past nothing; he had no visions of loveliness past and gone: he saw but living life: his genius was for the court, the elegance of fashion, and the bloom of the hour. Almost every thing that he did shewed his leaning to the soft, the graceful, and the effeminate.

His plan of working was, in my estimation, erroneous; he put in the heads of his portraits at once, but often left them floating in the midst

of a blank canvass, until it was difficult for him to recall the exact effect he had originally meant to give to the whole figure. The painter ought surely to bring out the whole man together. It has been said that he trusted inferior hands with filling up his back-grounds, and even the bodies, in many pictures; but I have ascertained that this was very far from being his custom, and that he himself finished all the pieces on which his fame depends, with most laborious and honest patience, to the minutest touch of a drapery.

Many think it is to be regretted that a continued influx of sitters filled up all the time of Lawrence, after he had acquired unrivalled skill in the mechanical portion of his art. He then, we are told, longed for leisure to give to the world a series of works of a higher order than mere portraiture, and yet partaking of its nature,—I mean, something half real, and half poetic; like what he has given us a fine specimen of in his Kemble as Hamlet. I am not prepared, however, to say, that I think his fame would have been lastingly served by an accumulation of pieces of this kind. At all events, twenty of them would hardly have atoned for the loss of one really great man's portrait from the hand of Lawrence.

Sir Thomas himself sometimes imagined that his genius fitted him for excelling in historical composition. He said that he withdrew reluctantly from it, lest it should end with him as it had done with many, in misery and disappointment. England looked, he averred, with coldness, and even aversion, on all such works; and he considered that the taste of the age was an effectual

bar to all epic glory. Of his fitness for historic productions let his sketches speak. His studies, as those ruder designs are called, which usher in the finished performances, are all of a very different order. They were fac-similes of heads which he was commissioned to paint, or figures in academic postures, such as students draw; but there are no indications of a spirit aspiring to higher things: neither the court, the camp, the historian's page, nor the poet's song, had inspired him.

JACKSON.

DURING the earlier days of art in Britain, a painter was required to be cunning in other crafts: he was, as the records of Henry III. tell us, carpenter, mason, glazier, house-painter, gilder, emblazoner, embroiderer, upholsterer, and tailor. We have no artist now, perhaps, who unites all or any of those professions with his own: yet, collecting its members mainly from the humbler ranks of life, art has had amongst its followers men of fame and name who were bred to other pursuits: Inigo Jones, if we may credit the sarcastic Ben Jonson, was originally a carpenter; Sir Christopher Wren had been an astronomer and mathematician; Hogarth, a silver-chaser; Banks, a worker in earthenware; Romney a cabinet-maker; Bird, an ornamenteer of tea-trays; and the painter, of whose life and works I am now about to write, was for some time a tailor.

John Jackson was born the 31st of May, 1778, at Lastingham, a little village in the North Riding of Yorkshire. His father, the tailor of the place, desirous of ensuring bread for his son, apprenticed him at an early age to his own business. *I have heard that the boy had an internal dislike*



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1853.

John Jackson

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to the trade, and worked at it with no good will: he had, probably, no settled notion of what pursuit was most suitable; a country bred boy can see but little to select from. His aversion to the needle and shears arose wholly from his love of painting, which came upon him whilst at school, and grew and gathered strength, as he related, from visits which he made to the pictures in the galleries of Lord Mulgrave and Castle-Howard.

His first attempts were portraits of his school companions: these were made chiefly with the pencil, and of a small size: but though rough and rude, as all such things must be, they were not without a certain freedom and vigour of outline; and it is said that discerning persons saw in them the tokens of a spirit original and unborrowed. Cheered by such praise, and animated by an inward consciousness of talent, he sought to make nearer approaches than black lead could suffice for to the pictures which he admired. One of his neighbours, a house-painter, supplied him with such colours as he imagined necessary; and, after many a secret and unseen effort, he produced a portrait, in which he imitated, not unhappily, the light and shade of a picture by Reynolds. This was shown to the village school-master, who happened to have some taste in art; he liked it so well, that he took it to Lord Mulgrave, who, pleased with the attempt, wished to see more sketches: these he liked still better, and sending for the young artist, was so pleased with his modest simplicity of manner, that he promised to keep him in mind.

These were not words of course or of courtesy:

Lord Mulgrave took the surest way to prove the genius of young Jackson, and advance his fortune. On his return to London, he showed the sketches, in pencil and in oil, to Sir George Beaumont, by whom they were pronounced to be no common things; and words of encouragement, and painting materials of the right kind, were now liberally supplied. Though Jackson still continued at his trade, he gave up all his mind, as well as the little leisure he had, to the study of painting: he read dissertations and criticisms on pictures; he compared the living nature before him with that of the works in the collections of his patrons; and, with a fresh eye and increase of knowledge, renewed his labours in lead and in oil. Of the offspring of those days of youthful hope and toil, I can give little or no account. The poet burns his early verses when the muse supplies better; and the artist destroys frequently the first gropings of his fancy, when knowledge helps him to something more graceful or lofty. Among the chaos of his works, at his too early death, was found one head painted in the colours which his friend the house-painter supplied; and men of taste were not wanting who perceived even in it the dawn of that deep and daring mode of colouring in which he afterwards excelled. It was, perhaps, on works of a more decided character than this that Sir George Beaumont founded his judgment, when he united with the Mulgrave family in purchasing up two years of Jackson's unexpired apprenticeship. The attempts with the blacklead pencil which brought *him first* into public notice were of those days;

and, while he was yet young, he was considered as one of the most skilful drawers of likenesses amongst living artists.

The first use which Jackson made of his freedom was to put himself on the road to London. On his arrival he presented himself to Sir George Beaumont, saying that a few portraits which he had drawn, in little, for the Mulgrave family and others, had put some money in his pocket, and that he wished to study in the schools of the Royal Academy, where he would have good advice and approved models. "You have done wisely," said Sir George; "London is the place for talents such as yours: but you must lay down a regular plan of study; you must copy the best pictures during the day, and avail yourself of the advantages of the Royal Academy during the evening. You have done much for yourself; but you have much to learn from others. To enable you to do all this you shall have fifty pounds a year while you are a student, and live in my house; you will soon require no aid."

If there are few young men equal in merit to Jackson, it must be confessed that patrons such as Sir George Beaumont are still more rare. In the house of his distinguished friend, as any one who has read our sketch of his life in this volume will guess, he met almost all the men of the age remarkable for taste or genius. Jackson could not fail to profit by such company; the defects of his education were here made up almost without exertion: his natural good taste was improved; and he retained little of his original condition but a certain modest simplicity of man-

ner which was his own by inheritance. His works, too, began to emerge from rudeness and inequality into correctness and beauty : the value of science, and acquaintance with the best models, soon became visible : but though he seemed daily, nay, hourly, to be on the ascent in all that he did with the lead pencil, his progress in oils was slow, and for some time not very promising. He loved the wildness of Fuseli, and the correctness of West ; but he studied Reynolds, and dreamed of him. The splendour of Sir Joshua's colouring, and the harmony of his light and shade, took his fancy most ; and he hoped, by labour and care, to unite these high qualities with his own talent for pencilling in a likeness. It was during those days of struggling labour in oils that he tried his hand in water colours ; and it must be confessed, that here his success was so great, that he might have been pardoned had he sought no higher fame. In this department he soon excelled all living artists ; but he was aware that reputations founded on fleeting materials are comparatively unimportant, and he resolved to master the mystery in oil colour, and earn his station amongst the chief painters of his time.

To accomplish this cost Jackson some seven years of toil ; and when he had pleased himself, he found that the difficult point of pleasing others was still unattained. The excellence of his drawings and his portraits in water colours was acknowledged ; but for some time his pieces in oil were reckoned unworthy of being hung lower than the highest line of pictures in the Royal Academy exhibition, where a work only goes

for so much coloured surface to hide the naked walls. His style of colouring was at first harsh, and deficient in harmony; it was startling, too, by its boldness; and his masses of light and shade served, for a time, to make the experienced stare. There were other obstacles. Hoppner, Beechey, Owen, Opie, Phillips, and Lawrence, had all been adopted by fame before him; and though some of these were too soon removed by death, the eminence of those that remained was so high that he could hope for nothing but what he conquered by dint of skill and genius. For many years the smooth elegance of Lawrence won all admiration away from what was considered the ruder and less cultivated style of Jackson. His first exhibited picture was the portrait of Master H. Robinson; this was in 1804, and the artist lived then in Hackley Street: in 1806, he exhibited the portrait of Lady Mulgrave and the Honourable Mrs. Phipps; his residence was then at 32. Haymarket: while he lived there he exhibited the likeness of the Honourable H. C. Phipps, of Lady Mary Fitzgerald, and the gallant Marquis of Huntley, now Duke of Gordon. In 1809, he removed to 54. Great Marlborough Street; and it is to this period that a very sensible writer in the Library of the Fine Arts alludes when he says, "Although Jackson had not established his reputation as a painter in oil, his portraits in water colours were universally admired: and his practice in this department was extensive, and productive of a very handsome income. In these the heads were tastefully drawn, the resemblances were faithfully correct.

and, although carefully finished, wrought with masterly spirit. The style, indeed, was so deservedly popular, that his practice was greater, perhaps, than that of any contemporary portrait painter in small. Many of the heads engraved in Cadell's splendid work, 'Portraits of Illustrious Persons in the Eighteenth Century,' were from drawings by Jackson."

From the year 1809 till the year 1816, when he was thought worthy of being elected an Associate in the Royal Academy, his fame as a painter in oils continued gradually on the rise. As the harmony of his light and shade increased, and the manner in which he disposed his masses of colour became more regular, or better understood, his portraits gradually descended lower and lower on the walls of the Royal Academy, and finally took their station with those of the most approved masters. During this period he exhibited in all some two-and-thirty portraits; and of these no less than seven were heads of members of the Royal Academy. It will not be deemed a drawback on his prudence, if we relate that all these were painted during the two years which preceded his admission as associate: he knew that compliments, such as his pencil could now pay, might not be without their influence in helping him to his object. He had now removed to Newman Street: the care of maintaining a family had come upon him: he was aware of the value which the world attaches to distinctions which should ever be the reward of merit, and naturally felt solicitous to obtain what he could not but *feel was his due*. In 1817, his patience and his

prudence were rewarded, and he was elected a member of the Royal Academy.

After all, during the twenty years which elapsed between the day on which he took his seat at the table of Sir George Beaumont, and the year 1817, when he was elected Academician, if we may judge by the list of his exhibited works, Jackson had made but little progress in captivating the nobility of the land by the force of his delineations and the vigour of his colouring. Only fourteen titled heads are named in the academy catalogue, — and it is to the honour of his earliest patrons that most of these belong to the family of Mulgrave. I was told, on enquiring about Jackson, in 1813, that he was rather clever in seizing a likeness, but was too unskilful or impatient to finish well what he hopefully began; and that his reputation was sustained chiefly by the influence of the Phippses and the Beaumonts.

The few who happened to dislike Lawrence were willing to detect a serious rival to his reputation in Jackson; and as early as the year of his election there were not wanting judges who took courage to assert that, in character and strength of colour, he was superior to Sir Thomas. Jackson himself smiled at these flatteries, yet they were not without their influence: he loved to be told of the slow snail-like diligence of the other, and of his ten sittings of three hours each; and he silently contrasted such labour with his own miraculous alacrity of hand, which enabled him to dash off a portrait in six sittings of an hour each, and yet omit nothing which a finished performance re-

quired. This almost unequalled facility of hand was natural to the man, and did not arise from any thing like indifference to fame; in truth, the pictures which he painted the quickest were painted best. He felt that glow of fancy which Sir Walter Scott is said to have felt when he was delineating scenes most akin to his fancy: to stop, and study, and consider, was fatal to that flowing or undulating continuity of thought and expression, which is as necessary in a picture as in a story. He was not one of those artists who form their subject by slow and repeated touches; he dashed off his work rapidly, as some of the painters of old are reported to have done. I never saw him at work but once. One of his brethren had obtained an order to paint a portrait of George III. for a corporation hall, and had worked all in except *the head* — there he had paused, — he was skilful in other things, but felt perplexed at portrait. In this moment of distress Jackson made his appearance; the palette and brushes were offered to his hand; he took them without saying a word, as he was wont when he did acts of kindness, and in an hour and a half dashed in an admirable likeness from memory, aided by one of Chantrey's busts, — it seemed the growth of enchantment.

A day in the life of such a regular person as Jackson is the emblem of a year, and one year represents a score. When it is told that a beautiful lady sat for her portrait, was ill to please with respect to posture, was a little whimsical in the matter of colour, and had her *own* peculiar notions of the cut of her dress,

but that the painter, by soft words, and sailing with the current, triumphed over all difficulties, and produced both a good likeness and a fine work of art, the history of an hundred portraits of ladies is related. Nor is the story of the sittings of the sterner sex more interesting or various : the genius or the rank of the sitters may give an importance to the labours of the painter ; but the weariness of monotony cannot fail to belong to continued descriptions of similar light and shade, similar sentiment, and not very dissimilar postures. The business, therefore, of a mere portrait painter, though agreeable to himself from the ease with which his work is done, and the pleasant company which it brings, affords few materials for biography or criticism. No doubt artists see, or imagine they see, a difference in the expression, the drawing, or the handling of each new head which comes from the easel ; but the world at large is not so sharp sighted. We must not imagine, however, that, though the labours of a portrait painter require less thought than those of a painter of history, all he has to do is to make a mere copy of the head before him : to produce a likeness is the least difficult part of the task ; were that all, study would be rendered easy, and academies might scatter their collections and dismiss their professors. A mere likeness is no more to be compared to a true portrait, than a chapter of the Newgate Calendar to the Heart of Mid Lothian.

As Reynolds had profited even in portrait painting from his Italian studies, Jackson, per-

haps, hoped the like result, when he set out for Rome, in company with Chantrey, in the summer of 1819. He had before visited Holland and Flanders with General Phipps, and that journey, hasty though it was, had, it is said, some effect in giving greater breadth and freedom to his style. In the magic of colour he had now little to acquire ; and in the rapidity of execution he was without a rival. It was, however, chiefly to colour and to execution that he still directed his attention. Nevertheless he allowed little to escape him : his taste took in the landscape of nature as well as the creations of art ; and he copied much that was lovely or remarkable in the land through which he journeyed. Few memorials, save those of the pencil, remain of this tour. The painter was a companion so pleasant and pliant, that he was as clay in the hands of the sculptor. " He was easy and accommodating," said Chantrey, " to a fault. During our journey to Rome, I never saw his temper ruffled for a moment : whatever we did he approved of it ; and whether we went to the right or to the left it was all the same to Jackson." He was much struck with the splendid ruins of Rome, and seemed occasionally to think that the architecture, both ancient and modern, rivalled the painting and the sculpture.

Though he did little for some time but wander astonished through the streets and the galleries, he settled down to study at last. The first of his Roman works was that noble portrait of Canova, which he painted for the Canova of England. When the Roman artists heard that a new painter had made his appearance among them,

they went to see how he handled his subject ; and there was some spreading of hands and shrugging of shoulders among them when they saw the rude rough way in which the stranger at first dashed in the likeness ; they all went away, prophesying utter failure : and even Canova himself, accustomed to see heads elaborated out by academic rules, was, for a while, inclined to think he was squandering his time in sitting to Jackson. At the fifth or sixth sitting, however, he exerted all the magic of his hand, and bestowed such brilliant depth of colour, and such truth and force of expression, that the great sculptor broke out into loud expressions of astonishment, greatly to the amusement as well as delight of Chantrey, whose confidence in his friend's powers had prepared him for this result. The wonder of the Roman brethren was still more strongly excited, when, on the fourth day before he left Rome, he set up his easel opposite the celebrated Titian of the Borghese palace, and began to copy it. " On the evening," said Chantrey, " of the fourth day of his labours he produced one of the most extraordinary imitations in pencilling, and in tone, that I ever saw. The astonishment of the Roman and German students amused me much : some of them had been toiling for months at copying the same picture, and had not succeeded ; and when they saw that a four days' work not only surpassed all their attempts, but fairly rivalled the great original, they knew not what to think or say." Jackson was unequalled for his fac-simile imitations ; he copied, in a couple of days, the " Three

Maries" in the collection at Castle Howard. He was fond of showing his skill in such things : his head of Reynolds, in the possession of Chantrey, might pass, with good judges, for the original by Sir Joshua ; and his copy of one of the portraits of Rubens, painted in the presence of the students of our Royal Academy, was regarded as perfect in all the chief excellences of the Flemish master. The students left their easels when Jackson began his work, and " stood marvelling," at his superior perceptions ; they not only felt, but expressed their admiration at the intelligence and skill which governed his pencil, and enabled him with this enviable facility to master his subject.

These achievements in the Roman capital were rewarded by his admission into the Academy of St. Luke. On his return through Florence he copied a couple of pictures in the Florentine Gallery, — his fame had flown before him, and the students were prepared to applaud. " In Venice," says Chantrey, " my friend spent most of his time contemplating the works of Titian and Tintoretto, in whose works the finest colour is combined with the finest composition ; the latter painter rose much in our esteem. In this country we know but too little of his merits : he is high in all things where he ought to be high. Jackson, though a silent man, was eloquent here ; indeed, on all subjects of a professional kind, he showed good judgment, and often surprised me by his remarks on works beyond the ordinary line of his studies." After an absence of several months he returned to London. His portrait of *Canova* was exhibited during the following year ;

his fame wanted but a work of the surpassing excellence of this to rise to an equality with the highest. "I consider his Canova," said Chantrey, whose judgment in such matters cannot be questioned, "as one of the finest specimens of true character and true colour in modern portraiture." Along with this he exhibited a group containing portraits of the Earl of Mulgrave, General Phipps, the Honourable Augustus Phipps, and Sir George Beaumont.

From the time of his becoming a member of the Royal Academy till his visit to Rome, Jackson exhibited in all twenty portraits; one of the most remarkable of which was the likeness of himself now in the collection of Lord Dover. He is represented with the palette in his left hand in the attitude of study: he appears to contemplate a picture, and so just and vivid is the expression, that one would imagine him about to lift his brush to the object of his examination. There is a visible connection between his mind and hand. I reckon this one of the best imagined of all his works. Another was the portrait of Earl Grosvenor, now Marquis of Westminster: it is an express image of care and prudence. Jackson had no complimentary way of gaining favour; he never endowed ordinary heads with high faculties; the sordid he left sordid, and to the wise he gave their wisdom. He had gradually changed his system of colour: at first he worked with black and white on a brown ground, laying the colours thin, and varnishing the whole so as to form that clear grey which Reynolds loved. One of his earliest portraits in this way was that of

Miss Stephens the actress, whom he drew with a song in her hand, and, as the critics of those days said, with harmony on her lips. He gradually employed a deeper and deeper body of colour with less varnish; but in whatever way he painted he never failed to show the same singular readiness of hand and the same sense of breadth and harmony. "The late Lord Carlisle," said Chantrey, "bought Jackson's portrait of Northcote, and placed it in the next room to that which contains the head of Snyders, by Vandyke; and our countryman's reputation for fine colouring loses nothing by the comparison." Northcote was something of a favourite with Jackson; mild and placid himself, he yet liked to sit and listen to the sarcastic and cynical remarks of the other.

These, and other works of the like excellence, had their effect on the public mind, and Jackson began to experience something of the sorrow which continual labour of the same kind brings. To paint the faces of the community at large from nine in the morning till five at night could not be otherwise than monotonous; and I have heard him say that he occasionally found it difficult to dismiss one sitter from his thoughts whilst he was limning another. As his fame extended friends increased in number; not friends only, who order their portraits, sit impatiently till they are painted, carry them wondering home, pay for them, and never think of the artist more,—I mean kind and permanent friends. One of the most steadfast of these appears to have been Lord Dover, for whom he executed not less than nine or ten pieces. Amongst

these, besides his own portrait, the best were the likenesses of Lady Dover, and Flaxman. The first is well known to all lovers of art for its beauty of drawing and the unrivalled splendour of its colours; the very feathers of the hat seem in motion, and the face over which they wave appears full of thought—the lips are about to speak: nor is there wanting a singular grace of manner and delicacy of touch in keeping with the natural loveliness of the countenance. I remember how many triumphant fingers were held to this work in the exhibition. An artist came up to me and said, “We have found a rival for Lawrence in female beauty, at last.” A fine engraving of this admirable portrait carried the name of Jackson through France and Germany; it was exhibited in the year 1823; and few modern pictures of any class have had more celebrity.

Another of the chief triumphs of his genius is the portrait of Flaxman; it is not a better likeness, nor yet better painted than that of Canova—but the head of the English sculptor was naturally more imaginative and sublime than that of the Italian: there is a sort of sombre grandeur about it which awes one. “At the Academy dinner in, I think, 1824,” says Lord Dover, “I sat exactly opposite to Flaxman, and was so much struck by the intelligence of his eye, the placid benignity of his countenance, and his altogether venerable head, that I became anxious to have those characteristics worthily represented in painting. In going down stairs I found myself next to Jackson, and said to him, ‘I never was *more struck in my life than with the countenance*

of Flaxman — you must paint him for me.' His success in this was so great, that I desired him to paint the head of Chantrey as a companion, which was not quite completed when he died." It was to the injury of his fame that he painted so few of those men whose genius ensures their being thought of hereafter, nor did he seem anxious in the matter; he executed orders as they came, and squandered his splendid colours on all who chose to pay him fifty guineas. He never entertained the idea of forming a private gallery for himself of the born heirs to fame in the island; he did not see that by this he would have doubled his chance of a hereafter; for the world at large loves not portraits for their colour and their expression alone; they make a difference between the head of one dead and forgotten, and of one dead and yet living.

He was not, however, sparing of his colours among his brethren of the Royal Academy: of its members, he painted, in the year 1814, Bone, Stothard, Ward, and West, the president. In 1815, he did the same for Westmacott, Thomson, and Shee; and, in 1816, he made the portrait of Nollekens. If we add to these the drawing of Northcote, in 1818, it will bring us down to Jackson's admission into the Academy as a member. I have no wish to impute his election to the persuasion of these nine portraits, for his merits were such as to render his admission a matter of right; nevertheless they no doubt added a little to the influence of his genius; and it is a fact that he was more frugal of his time regarding the heads of his brethren afterwards. Of the remainder of

the forty, he painted Dance, in 1819; Flaxman, in 1826; Soane, and Chantrey, in 1830; the three latter were commissions. Of the merits of these thirteen portraits it is not necessary to speak at any length. Northcote, Stothard, Flaxman, Soane, and Chantrey, are the best. The first is querulous and cynical; the second, mild and contemplative; the third, imaginative; the fourth, age-worn and full of anxious thought; the fifth, in an attitude of study, less natural than it should be, yet striking and impressive, from vigour and luxury of colour. To these I may add his own portrait already described, and, perhaps, the best imagined of them all, which makes him the painter of fourteen members of the Royal Academy. It was to these, perhaps, as well as others, that Chantrey alluded, when he said, "Much has been written and spoken about Lawrence's delicacy of colour and refinement of character in his heads, and very justly; but in many instances Jackson has surpassed him in the former quality, though seldom if ever in the latter."

He exhibited, in all, one hundred and forty-five pictures, between the years 1804 and 1830;—of these, twelve, or more, were the portraits of ladies of rank and beauty: viz 1. Lady Mulgrave; 2. Lady Mary Fitzgerald; 3. Lady Georgiana Morpeth; 4. Hon. Miss Lascelles; 5. Lady Georgiana Herbert; 6. Lady Caroline Macdonald; 7. Lady Harriet Paget; 8. Lady Mary Howard; 9. Lady Anne Vernon; 10. Countess of Sheffield; 11. Lady Catherine Phipps. Some of these are works exquisite both for natural grace and beauty of colour. Reynolds and

Lawrence made, as far as naming them went; some of their lady-sitters into divinities, and caused the heroines of the courts of the two last Georges to carry about the names of Juno, Iris, Minerva, Circe, and Venus. No such fancy ever entered the head of Jackson: to be a handsome woman he thought honour sufficient; as such he saw his fairest sitters, and as such he painted them. He was, in truth, no flatterer; he took no pains to eke out the deficiencies of nature either in shape or colour. He had not the presumption to think of making out the head as nature should have made it. This sort of simplicity, together with the influence of the fascinating pencil of Lawrence, kept many, I fear, of the fairest dames of the day from Jackson's studio.

With the sterner part of the creation he was in more request. He painted the portraits of some twenty men of rank, including one prince of the blood. I shall write down the most of their names, to show by whom the genius of the painter was supported, in times when strong rivals were in the field: 1. Marquis of Huntley (now Duke of Gordon); 2. Marquis of Hartington (now Duke of Devonshire); 3. Lord Mulgrave; 4. Archbishop of York; 5. Lord Normanby (now Earl Mulgrave); 6. Marquis (now Duke) of Buckingham; 7. Lord Grosvenor; 8. Viscount Lascelles; 9. Earl Grey; 10. Lord Grenville; 11. Lord Braybrooke; 12. Lord Dundas; 13. Bishop of Winchester; 14. Hon. Edmund Phipps; 15. Hon. James Abercrombie; 16. Lord Villiers; 17. Earl of Sheffield; 18. Marquis of Chandos; 19. Duke of Wellington. To these

may be added some dozen or so of private gentlemen, and men of science. These were all more or less distinguished by the artist's singular ease of hand, harmony of colour, and truth and vigour of effect. The Duke of Wellington is a whole length; and the idea of the painter was to stamp something of the sternness of his field-of-battle look upon him; the colour is too grey, and, though the look is concentrated and piercing, it is not one of the happiest of the painter's efforts. The genius of Jackson was strictly imitative, not creative; he indulged in no fancies; he gave us no little domestic groupings, such as Reynolds excelled in; nor did he venture on heads half real and half poetic, like Opie, Owen, and Romney. He took up his palette without any emotion of pleasure or of pain, and laid it down unconscious that he had done any thing remarkable.

The friends of Jackson, during the last two years of his life, observed, with concern, his fading looks and his decreasing cheerfulness; but no symptoms of weakness, though sometimes of haste, were to be seen in his works. He continued to paint with his usual diligence; but fits of dejection came upon him, though he had no cause to complain of fortune: he grew absent of mind, and sometimes gloomy; and though in earlier years not averse to jovial society, he now became less social; imagined he had got a sight of the evil of his ways; frequented prayer meetings; and even went the length of officiating as precentor to a congregation of obscure sectarians. All this, or much of it, could only be attributed to decaying health and strength. He was happy in domestic

matters. His first wife, the daughter of a respectable jeweller, in London, was dead, and had left one child, a daughter, to his care. His second wife, a daughter of Ward, the painter, loved to set his household in order, and maintain his station in society. His painting rooms were in Newman Street, but his residence was in St. John's Wood, and there he entertained his friends; and, when the hour of labour came, he was conveyed to his studio in a chariot of his own. His income was reckoned high; and when one of his friends talked to him of saving a part for old age, he answered, that he thought he might save eight hundred a year; this however, he only contemplated; for, such was his want of economy, that he consumed all his winnings, and felt, at last, the decay of body and the sinking of spirit which announce the grave without having made any provision for his wife and children. His earnings are said to have sometimes amounted to fifteen hundred a year; but I have heard it surmised that he often painted at a lower price than the one named on his tablets, viz., fifty guineas per portrait: so that, in fact, he might appear to be making fifteen hundred a year when he was not realising more than a thousand.

The death of Lawrence seemed, to the world, to remove the only obstacle between Jackson and an increasing fame, and a boundless fortune. I have, however, seen some of his own letters on the subject, and in them there is neither hope expressed nor much sorrow intimated. The day for the election of a new president approached, and the bosoms of not a few of our portrait-

painters were in a flutter. That Jackson dreamed of the vacant chair, I cannot assert; friends were not wanting who advised him to try; he at least demurred upon the matter, for so I interpreted his meaning, when he thus wrote to one of his well-wishers:—"I assure you, my dear sir, that the opinion expressed in your note respecting a future president has proved as gratifying to me on one hand as humiliating on the other; for we shall not soon see that office discharged with the ability and integrity which we have witnessed for the last ten years. Many thanks for the expression of your good wishes towards me. I believe no interest without the walls of the Institution would be available, and perhaps less within, where each one is a party immediately concerned, and all consider themselves equally eligible." Jackson probably was aware of his want of smooth and persuasive words to lull the storms which the more turbulent of his brethren might raise; and he may also have felt that his deficiency of education rendered him unfit for a place where scholarship is looked for, though not always found. The hopes and fears of many, both lower and higher than Jackson, were set at rest when, on the day of election, Shee was raised to the chair of Reynolds and Lawrence.

But though much public favour usually accompanies the president, Jackson had no cause to fear that his income would suffer from the preference which his brethren had shown in the choice of Shee. His skill of hand and knowledge of colours were still his own, and he was generally

considered as second only, and that but in some matters, to Lawrence himself. The world of taste expected to see Jackson assert his superiority; and many heard, with disappointment and regret, that he was obliged to seek health in the country. But the health which meadows, and glades, and river banks, often give to the thankless and the undeserving was denied to the painter; he visited his native place, and cast his eye, for a last time, on the village where he lived when a child; saw a present which he made, of a copy of "Christ in the Garden," to his parish church, placed in a suitable light, and set out for London, to the bosom of his family. He had taken an inside seat; but one of those overbearing gentlemen whom the meek and the careless are sometimes doomed to meet with interposed, and Jackson, without cloak or proper covering, was driven to the top of the coach to encounter a storm of wind and rain. Cold and drenched, he reached his own house; and a long and severe illness, which brought him nigh the grave, was the consequence of this unfortunate journey. He had in some degree recovered from this, when Lord Mulgrave died, and Jackson, feeble and ill as he was, considered it his duty to follow the remains of his benefactor to the grave. On his way he felt himself worse, and, amid the mourners, was remarked as one for whom the grave was gaping. He reached his own house with difficulty, sickened, and, in spite of all human skill, died in June, 1831, in the fifty-third year of his age.

In person, Jackson was above the middle height,

well made, though slim, and of a mild and pleasing look. He was silent in mixed company, but his silence had nothing surly in it; with a friend or two he was companionable, lively, and entertaining. Though some questions were rather rudely agitated during his day in the Academy, he mingled not in such bickerings, but maintained his ordinary tone and temper. This was not from education but from nature; he was born so, and it cost him no effort to practise it. "I never saw him so happy," said Lord Dover, "as when contemplating the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds; and he never lost an opportunity of purchasing his pictures, when, at a sale, the price came within his reach. In settling the prices of his own pictures, he was moderate even to generosity. The only difficulty I ever found with him was in persuading him to let me pay him for such works as he painted for me: he used to say 'We will talk of that another time.' His knowledge and judgment of old pictures were considerable, and I bought several of those in my rooms by his advice. He had imbibed the purest taste in art from Sir George Beaumont, the best judge of pictures I ever remember. In private he could not be but beloved for his singleness of heart, and his simplicity and truth of mind; in all the relations, too, of domestic life, he was exemplary, which is not surprising, when we reflect that his actions were regulated by a fervent sense of religion."

As a painter, his chief merits were truth of character, and force of colour. In most of his portraits, however, he appears to have limited

his views to an accurate image of the person ; he is vigorous as far as flesh and blood give vigour, but neglects too much to inspire his heads with sentiment, or bestow upon them a visible capacity for thought ; and it cannot be denied that he often has something of vulgarity about his vigour. He had uncommon readiness of hand — a rapid felicity in finishing : his colouring is deep and clear. Some continue to speak of him as the ablest of the express followers of Reynolds ; I should rather say, judging him by his best works, such as will keep their fame hereafter, that, in expression, Jackson occupies a place between the elegant detail of Lawrence, and the manly generalities of Raeburn. In freedom and vigorous breadth of colour he more than approaches the first President of the Academy.

LIVERSEEGE.

OF this painter a short account was written for "The Athenæum" by Miss Jewsbury, now Mrs. Fletcher; and another by another hand appears in the "Library of the Fine Arts." As both writers were acquainted with the artist, and show much taste and feeling, I have availed myself of their labours, adding all the original information I could obtain, and such remarks as seemed necessary.

Henry Liverseege was born at Manchester in the year 1803. The fine arts flourish most where wealth and knowledge abound: they are less heeded in places where men have to procure subsistence before they sacrifice to elegance. That Manchester, lately a village, but now a town with two members of parliament, encouraged as well as produced Liverseege, must be taken as a proof of increasing wealth, and growing taste. At first the fortunes of the painter were dark enough. He was born weak and deformed; and when he began to gain strength, the painful discovery was made, that his father disliked him, and treated him harshly. Of this cruel parent, it is said, "he could never speak without feelings of deep emotion; oftentimes with tears at the manner he *had been treated* by him — his cruelty and his

neglect." Poverty has been assigned as the cause of this unnatural conduct: his father held a subordinate situation in a cotton manufactory, and supported himself with difficulty: but poverty has usually proved a kind and compassionate nurse, with whom weakness of body excites a warmer sympathy and a deeper love. We must set it down to deficiency of feeling. That he looked upon his helpless child with aversion, has not been denied, and must be recorded to the dishonour of human nature. The place of the father was supplied by the uncle, a person generous and kind, who brought the boy up, and watched over him with care, and even fondness. He was afflicted with an asthma from his cradle; and, besides being weak, he was not a little peevish. His temper, however, improved with his health, and all allowed him to be quick in comprehension, and desirous of knowledge.

The schoolmaster taught him to write, but he taught himself to draw. It was remarked, that a love of drawing grew upon him: he began soon to sketch heads and groups; he did this, he said, because he saw others do it: yet it was observed that he was solicitous to excel, and was never satisfied unless his attempts surpassed those of his companions. He was allowed to remain longer at school than usual, because of his weakness of body; but, when strong enough to be put to business, it was found that a love of painting had not only taken possession of his fancy, but that his uncle was resolved to indulge his inclinations. When he heard this he smiled, and it *was* observed from that day forward he was more

cheerful, and that he looked to his benefactor with a reverential fondness which time only served to strengthen and confirm.

Of the early studies of Liverseege little has been told us; nor is it, perhaps, important; for they were portraits, and chiefly remarkable only for that sort of staring Saracen-head style of likeness which common spirits deal in. Portraits, however, brought him employment and bread, and made him known in his native county. They taught him, too, to combat with difficulties of form and expression, and prepared him for success in that dramatic style of painting by which he will be known to posterity. That he had talent suitable for what Barry contemptuously calls the art of "face painting," is more probable than that he had that nice tact and patient courtesy which the variable moods of querulous sitters require. He was quick-tempered and impetuous; a reader of looks, and an interpreter of signs; ready to take offence, and equally ready to be appeased. This touchy sensibility was not in the way of his dramatic compositions, but it was otherwise than welcome to that large portion of the community who think they confer a favour by sitting for their likenesses, and who look for submission and obedience at the hand of a painter. It would not be agreeable to one so sensitive as Liverseege to be obliged to bow his own judgment in form and colour to the dictum of those who had not made art their study. Tired, and perhaps disgusted, he forsook the field of portraiture for the wide realm of imagination.

His success in works of fancy was in the com-

mencement otherwise than cheering. In the year 1827 he painted three small pictures representing banditti, and sent them to the Manchester exhibition. They were disposed of with difficulty, and at a small price. He was not, however, disheartened ; he had found out where his strength lay ; he had a strong perception of the pictorial qualities of poetry and romance ; he loved, like Hogarth before him, to look on living life, and had some of that eminent artist's feeling for what was ludicrous and striking. The first work which stamped him as an original genius, was his picture of " Adam Woodcock," from Scott's Abbot, which was admired and purchased by Lord Wilton. This acknowledgment of his merit was the signal for the approbation of many who hesitated before. The painter began to be enquired after, and his studio visited, by persons willing to praise, if not to purchase. His next work was the interview between " Isabella and the Recluse," in the Black Dwarf, in which he perhaps performed as much as art could do with a subject unsuitable for the pencil. That deformed and mis-shapen lump of humanity can barely be endured in the narrative. The addition of shape and lineament fills up the measure of our dislike. The fame which the artist acquired induced strangers who visited Manchester to make enquiries concerning him. They were told that he still lived with his generous uncle and aunt ; was well to do in the world ; that London booksellers were attracted by his reputation ; and that he no longer painted signs for alehouses or portraits at five guineas *a piece*.

He came to London to draw in the British Museum, and study at the British Institution; and was soon distinguished among the students for his quickness and skill in drawing; more especially for his fine copies of the works of Rubens, Vandyke, and Teniers. He was aware of his own merit in this way, and sometimes declared he could make a copy so like in sentiment and hue, that no one could say which was the original. He attended occasionally an academy, now discontinued, in Savoy Street, Strand, and availed himself of the permission which Lawrence gave to all young artists of respectability to look at his collection of paintings. During one of those visits, Sir Thomas made his appearance, spoke to Liverseege with much kindness, enquired how painting prospered in Manchester, and at parting said, if he desired to become a probationer in the Royal Academy, he would have much pleasure in giving him an introductory letter to the Council. I know not how soon after this the young artist, desirous of being admitted to draw at the Royal Academy, applied for admission, and sent at the same time a specimen of his skill in art: he had, however, neglected to obtain testimonials to his personal character; and, as the Royal Academy are judges of morals as well as of drawings, this informality subjected him to what he considered the indignity of a refusal: he was deeply offended, and never applied again.

On his return to Manchester, he renewed his labours in the dramatic department of painting, and with increased success. He sought his subjects chiefly in books — sometimes in nature.

Of the latter kind is one called "The Enquiry," representing a simple country lad, with a present of game in his hand, enquiring his way of a pompous and supercilious porter standing at the door of his master's house. There seems nothing more aimed at than a delineation of a real scene: the swollen turkey-cock air of the one, and the timid, awe-struck simplicity of the other, are happily hit off. Of a similar character, in point of literal delineation from life, is "The Cobbler reading Cobbett's Register." You see at once that the son of Crispin is spelling his way, though he is putting on a look of pondering sagacity. It is a happy little picture. The "Recruit" is another of those natural and striking things. This is a wonderful performance. Within that range of subjects nothing has been produced which surpasses it. The expressive attitude and general air of the perplexed recruit; the free and devil-may-care bearing of the soldier, are admirably and truly depicted, and no less so the anxious attitude and imploring look of the female. He has introduced an incident which adds considerably to the interest of the work: in the background is represented an old woman watching beside an old infirm soldier, whose shattered body and wooden leg tell the story of his life. The painting is clear and light, and the handling beautifully free. These three pictures are all the offspring of the painter's own observation or fancy, and bear upon them the marks of a mind which studied the workings of the human heart.

Liverseege seems to have forgiven the Royal Academy for refusing to open their doors to him as

a student; for in 1831 he sent two pictures to the Exhibition: "Sir Piercie Shafton and Mysie Happer," from Scott's *Monastery*; and "Hamlet and his Mother in the Closet," from Shakspeare. The latter is a noble work; the spirit of the King of Denmark seems really of the other world, and has all the feeling and poetry, without the extravagance, of Fuseli. Mysie Happer is a clever creation, and nearly realises the miller's maiden of Scott: her lover is less to our liking; his legs are a little too long, but he has much of the affected and put-on airs of the original. For this fine picture the Duke of Devonshire gave fifty guineas. They were well received by the world, and the name of Liverseege began to be heard of among coteries and connoisseurs. At the same time, he had several paintings in the Exhibition of the Society of British Artists, of merit equal or superior to those in the Royal Academy. These were, "The Grave-diggers," from Hamlet; "Catherine Seyton," from the Abbot, and "The Benedicite, or Holy Daughter," from the painter's fancy. The latter was painted in London, and admitted to the gallery after the Exhibition opened. The grave-diggers are too literal transcripts of life to satisfy us as personations of those of the great dramatist: the heads, too, are curious and odd. There is, however, no exaggeration; indeed, the artist never erred in that way; he was a great master of propriety, as well as skilful in the matter of colours. "Catherine Seyton" is, it seems, a likeness of the painter's sister. The figure is easy and graceful; and "*The Benedicite*" represents a veiled lady kneeling.

ing at the altar receiving the blessing of a priest. There is a touching reverence of manner about the devotee, which gained the attention of many good judges; while those who were admirers of fine colour spoke in high terms of the opposition which her white dress and veil formed to the sable robe of the monk. It was purchased by Heath for his annual "The Keepsake."

While Liverseege was thus making his works known in the metropolis, he forgot not his native place. In the exhibition of the Manchester Institution of August, 1831, he had four pictures: 1. Don Quixote in his Study, 2. Cobbett's Register. 3. The Fisherman. 4. Don Quixote. Of one of these, Cobbett's Register, I have already spoken. "The Fisherman," says a clever writer, "he painted during his stay in London last summer, and picked up the model at the bottom of Arundel Street, Strand. He composed the whole into a picturesque and exquisite painting, exhibiting the Fisherman in a doubting mood, whether he should take another pot or no. The scene is laid outside the door of a public house. On a table is the pot turned upside down, the fisherman standing beside it, his hands in his pockets, a pipe in his mouth, and the sea in the distance." Love of drink promises to be victorious. The "Don Quixote in his Study" was painted in London: he intended to have sent it to Liverpool for the fifty-guinea prize of the Institution, but was prevailed upon to exhibit it in his native place. The grave dignity and touched loftiness of soul of the inimitable hero of Cervantes are finely embodied. "It will be found, perhaps," says one

of his biographers, "the best painting he has ever done, as displaying a fine eye for colour and knowledge of chiaro-scuro and breadth. The picture is very broad, clear, rich, and harmonious; and the contrast of Don Quixote's pink gown against the green curtain of his library affords a delightful effect. The Don is represented with a countenance noble and dignified, but wasted and careworn: on a table before him lies a great book in which he is reading, with an iron helmet and a globe, and some other books. The light strikes down from the left upon the table and book, and the yellow table-cover assists to diffuse it. The only extreme decided colour is his black velvet cap, relieved by a gold tassel. It was hinted to him, that a little blue somewhere would improve it. 'Oh, by no means,' he said; 'it would then be too fiery.' Every object and particular colour in this truly admirable work is painted from the model; and, indeed, he never worked upon any design without having the objects before him disposed in the exact order as he wished to represent them. This is the reason why his works possess that vivid air of identity and individuality which cannot be obtained by any other means." Fame was now of the painter's household, and money poured in. "The Recruit" was sold for one hundred and thirty guineas, and his sketches brought large prices. It was observed that his health improved when success dawned; he became more pleasant, too, in company, and more cheerful in public. To his uncle and aunt he was ever the same; gratitude was, with him, a fixed principle of soul.

From the year 1826, when he resolved to release himself from the thralldom of portraiture, to the close of the year 1831, Liversseege sketched or painted all those pictures through which his name claims a place among the distinguished artists of his country. His fancy teemed with designs, and his mind continually brooded over large undertakings. We may say, that, till the twenty-fourth year of his age, he was as a man wandering in the dark, without any visible aim or mark to satisfy his ambition: he was waging a continual war with fortune, and groping his way to distinction by the aid of a wandering rather than a fixed light. With the first outburst of success the cloud was lifted from him at once; he asserted, by a succession of fine works, teeming with character and beauty, his claim to be ranked with the rising. Nor did he come forward as the disciple of a particular school; his academy was the field and the cottage, the poem and the romance. It is much to be lamented, that he left many fine works incomplete. Of these, "Salvator Rosa among the Banditti" was partly finished in oil. The great painter appears in captivity; his portfolios of designs are scattered about; a single brigand guards him, while the others sleep in picturesque groups around. There is much of "savage Rosa's" own light and darkness and dash about the work. He exchanged a sketch in oil of "Edie Ochiltree" with his friend David Roberts for an exquisite architectural drawing: he did the same with several other artists: a sketch of "Slender and Anne Page" he gave to an intimate friend. He was

not only a lover of art, but a zealous admirer of all the eminent artists of his day.

He remained in London during the year 1831, till summer was far advanced: he had several meetings with the Duke of Devonshire, who interested himself in his fortunes, and requested to have other works from his hand. He had received some attentions from Etty; he returned this civility by calling on him twice: he ventured a third visit without having been favoured with a call, a condescension not common to him. He found the academician at his easel: he spoke, but did not move, or cease to paint; upon which Liverseege said, "I fear I am interrupting you, sir, so good morning." Surprised at this, Etty laid down his palette, requested his visiter to stay, and said, "You do not at all interrupt me." All would not do: he continued going; and, when at the door, said, "This is my third visit to your one, Mr. Etty," and away he went. "However, shortly after," says a friend, "his spirit was appeased by the academician calling upon him." He always had a scolding ready for those acquaintances who neglected visiting him for two days at least. He was subject to very sudden fits of illness, and was attacked several times when last in London; and when any one neglected calling on him, he would, at first, be very angry; but he would soon grow cheerful, and used to wind up his rebuke by exclaiming, "Sir, you would leave one to get ill, and die and be buried before coming to see them." He was not one of those artists who feel damped and *dismayed* in the presence of paintings of the

highest excellence. One day, he paused before Wilkie's "Village Festival," and, pointing out to a friend the high merits of the work, said, "I would stake my reputation on the production of a picture of similar character; and if any one would commission me to do it, I would rest my name on it alone, and care not if I never painted more." He had such knowledge of human nature, such skill in delineating the manners and businesses of humble life, and such mastery over his materials, that there is no doubt he would have produced a work well worthy of being admired.

Liversege, during the last six months of the year 1831, was observed, at times, to be melancholy and drooping: these dark fits were followed by sudden gleams of joy and gladness, when he discoursed of art with much enthusiasm and knowledge. He loved the company of his brethren in art, and proposed, when in London, to set apart one day in the week for meeting them, in a room to be fitted up with old-fashioned furniture, carved oak work, curious armour, and ancient weapons. He had an edition of Shakspeare in one large volume, which he called his work-day bible, and always reckoned himself well in health when he could enjoy it without weariness. He was conscious of the weakness of his body; he avoided all ungentle exercises, took great care of himself, and loved to hear his friends quote the old proverb, "A rickety hinge holds longest together." He was continually on the look out for singular heads and curious characters to suit him for models in designs which

he had made. He began a painting of "Christopher Sly and the Landlady," from Shakspeare, but was long before he could find such a cobbler as he desired. At length he found a man he imagined would suit; and, having placed him in his studio, set down a bottle of strong gin beside him, saying, "Drink whenever you please." The liquor vanished in a short time, the spirit of the cobbler refused to stir, he sat as sober as a judge on the circuit; another bottle of gin was brought; it went the same way in course of time, and the son of Crispin sat steady as ever. "Begone," cried the painter in a passion, "it will cost me more money to make you drunk than the picture will fetch."

After his return to Manchester, little was heard of Liverseege for some months; it seems, that fits of more than his usual sadness came upon him, and, though he did not consider himself worse than usual, he was observed to be restless and irritable more than was his wont. Of death he loved to speak. "I care not," he said, "for what is called dying, for I have no enjoyment in life save what is derived from success in my pursuits; yet I should not like to die until I had done some great work to immortalise my name — to be remembered after death is, indeed, a great consolation." Though ailing and complaining during the winter, he continued to paint with his usual enthusiasm. He had sketched a picture of Falstaff, and expected from it an increase of reputation; for he looked upon it as superior to all his other efforts. Shakspeare lay beside the easel, and Cervantes and Scott were there too;

for he admired them, and called them his "friends." He began to alter in his looks about the middle of winter, seemed to consider that "death was with him dealing," and said so to some who sought to cheer him. He was not seriously unwell for more than two or three days, and never so ill as to be unable to sit up and converse: he had desired at night that Shakspeare might be laid on his breakfast table; and no one felt alarmed till he was seized suddenly, and expired, on the morning of the 13th of January, 1832.

Liverseege was five feet five inches high, thin and spare, slightly deformed in the left shoulder, and of a pale complexion; his looks were enquiring and suspicious; his eyes had a glance of unceasing anxiety, and his mouth expressed nervous irritability. Much of this arose from long illness; for his natural disposition was open and generous, his sentiments elevated, and his manners courteous and winning. He had a strong consciousness of genius upon him, and often alluded to it; but he never rendered it offensive. He admired the talents of others, and loved to speak of the merits of the chief leaders of the English school: his idols were Reynolds and Lawrence; but he preferred, it seems, the latter, because his minute marking assimilated more to his own style. In his dress and appearance he was neat and gentlemanly, and though he was not a little vain, his vanity was not at all of the kind to give offence.

As an artist, the excellence of Liverseege lies *in dramatic representation of human life, and the delineation of character.* He had a fine eye, a

clear head, and a cunning hand. He loved to paint scenes where visible life and imagination meet; nor can it be determined whether he excelled most in seriousness or humour: his wild caverns, filled with wild banditti, may be compared with his Cobbler reading Cobbett; and his Grave-diggers may be placed by the side of his Hamlet or Don Quixote. Some of his heads are, perhaps, too singular for the subject; and we frequently find ourselves wondering over these breathing oddities, when we should be arrested by the sentiment of the picture. He has been compared to Bonington. I see little resemblance. In dramatic character Liverseege is much superior. We think of the groups of the latter as individuals with distinct characters; of the individuals of the former as of groups in a landscape. His style seems his own, his manner of handling is masterly, and his colouring deep, rich, and harmonious. His imagination was not apparently of a high order; he had little of that almost divine faculty of shaping his pictures in air, and commanding the splendid visions to abide till he invested them with form and colour. Hence his continual anxiety for models, not of body so much as of look and sentiment: he poured out his gin with the hope of obtaining a tipsy representative for Shakspeare's Sly. A friend sat to him for the "Knight of the Woful Countenance," though any one familiar with the Don of Cervantes, cannot but feel that the character is one essentially poetic, and that the looks must correspond. He found a model, one who *required no stuffing*, for his Sir John Falstaff. It is

not Sir John's corpulence, but his wit, which the poet presses upon us : —

“ A fair round belly with good capon lined ”

is easily hit off ; but who can hope to be a model for the humour which made the prince laugh “ till his face was like a wet cloak ill folded up ? ”

BURNET.

ART has its early victims, as well as poetry. Chatterton and Kirke White gave no greater promise of excellence in verse, than did Bonington and Liverseege in painting. To these names we may add that of James Burnet, a young landscape painter of no common powers. He was born at Musselburgh in the year 1788, and was the fourth son of George Burnet, general surveyor of excise in Scotland, a man of probity and talent, and Anne Cruikshank his wife, sister to the eminent anatomist, the friend and associate of John Hunter. Others of his house have attained distinction: his brother John Burnet is as widely known for his talents in original composition with the pencil as for his almost matchless skill with the graver. The family came originally from Aberdeen.

The instruction which Burnet received at school during the day was excellently followed up in the evening by that of his mother, a devout and prudent woman. There are few of his countrymen who derive not as much of their knowledge from their father's fireside as from the public schools. His mind took an early turn *towards art*: during his leisure hours he loved

to walk into the studio of Scott, the landscape engraver, with whom his brother John was a pupil; nor was he long in lifting the pencil; the result of his attempts was, that he was put under the care of Liddel to learn wood carving, at that time a profession both lucrative and popular. This branch of art, indeed, is now nearly extinct; a love of what is plain has come upon the country, and carved chairs, couches, and cabinets, are expelled from parlour and drawing-room; our cornices and architraves are no longer ornamented, and festoons and flowers flourish no more on our walls.

During his apprenticeship, Burnet studied at the Trustees' Academy, under Graham, where he was noticed for the natural truth of his delineations. As his skill of hand increased, he began to perceive the limited nature of the art of carving in wood. He sent some of his compositions to his brother John, who had removed to London; expressed a wish to follow and devote his time to painting; and without waiting for a letter of encouragement, which was on the way, he left Edinburgh, and arrived in London in the year 1810, in the twenty-second year of his age. He found his brother busied on his fine engraving of Wilkie's inimitable "Blind Fiddler." He stood and looked earnestly and long on the picture; he had seen nothing so full of character, or so finished in all its details, during his studies in the North. A new light, he said, broke upon him, and from that moment he resolved to alter *his style of drawing*. In this resolution he was *confirmed* by examining the works of the best

Dutch masters in the British Gallery. In them he perceived much of what he admired in Wilkie : he lost no time in making attempts in what ought to be called the natural, rather than the Dutch style. " So convinced was he," said one who knew him intimately, " of the little progress he had made in colouring, and the other essentials which are every thing in the department of the art he had chosen, that he may be said to have only then commenced his studies ; so little applicable is an academical education to the humbler and picturesque walks of art."

In Wilkie and the Dutch masters he perceived something entirely after his own heart : he loved the vivid human character in the former ; and of the latter, Potter and Cuyp became his favourites. He desired to unite their qualities ; and while he studied their mode of handling their subjects, and endeavoured to look on nature with their eyes, he was perfectly aware that nothing short of originality of conception would lead him to distinction. He had sought what he wanted in the academy, but found it not ; he therefore determined, like Gainsborough, to make nature his academy ; and with a sketch-book and pencil he might be seen wandering about the fields around London, noting down scenes which caught his fancy, and peopling them with men pursuing their avocations, and with cattle of all colours, and in all positions. Of these sketches I have seen a vast number : some are rude and ill arranged ; others display bits of great beauty and character : the greater number are such as he *probably intended to paint pictures from ; for the*

scenes are generally well depicted, and the sentiment plainly expressed. Of cattle he seems to have been particularly fond, and has represented them in all possible postures, and of all hues—"The ring-straked, the speckled, and the spotted." He also seems to have been a judge. Some of our cattle painters, imagining that the more flesh cows have the more milk they will give, have plumped them up into a condition for the butcher, but not for the milk-pail. Burnet knew that a moderately lean cow produced most milk, and in this way he drew them. But in all that he did he desired to tell a story. This he knew would give interest to his works, and produce at the same time action, expression, and variety. Nor did he confine his studies to the fields alone: he made himself familiar with the indoor as well as outdoor economy of a farmer's household during seed-time, summer, harvest, and winter; he left no implement of husbandry unsketched, and scarcely any employment of the husbandman without delineation.

The first fruit of all this preparation was his picture of "Cattle going out in the Morning." There is a dewy freshness in the air; and the cattle, released from their stalls, seem to snuff the richness of the distant pastures, and acknowledge the loveliness of the day. His next picture was superior even to this: in his "Cattle returning Home in a Shower," purchased by Sir Thomas Baring, "he has introduced," says an excellent judge, "every thing that could in any way characterise the scene. The rainbow in the sky, the glittering of the rain upon the leaves;

the dripping poultry under the hedge; the reflections of the cattle on the road, and the girl with her gown over her shoulders; all tend with equal force to illustrate his subject." This picture placed him in the first rank as a pastoral painter. Others followed of equal or superior truth and beauty: such as his — 1. Key of the Byre; 2. Crossing the Brook; 3. Cowboys and Cattle; 4. Breaking the Ice; 5. Milking; 6. Crossing the Bridge; 7. Inside of a Cowhouse; 8. Going to Market; 9. Cattle by a Pool in Summer; 10. Boy with Cows. Some of these are in the collections of the Earl of Coventry, the Earl of Egremont, and the Marquis Camden: others are in the possession of the painter's relatives. A very fine one, "The Boy with the Cows," belongs to James Wadmore, Esq. and hangs worthily with the Wilkies and the Turners, and other masters of the calling.

I have said that he sketched and studied much in the fields. He felt that the excellence which he coveted could not be obtained on more moderate conditions. It was also his practice to write down on the spot his own observations regarding the future handling of the picture in oil: these are both curious and numerous, but their scope and aim are so interwoven with the landscape to which they relate, that few of them will be understood separate. I find the following memoranda regarding distances — "Extreme distance ought generally to be of the same tint as the sky with which it unites; and as it approaches the middle ground, the strata appear *interspersed* with touches of light and dark, such

as the lights upon the tops of houses with their shadows. Be particular in marking the buildings with a firmer line than the trees; never admit colour into your distance when in the direction of the light; scumble a little with purple and grey at the bottom of your objects, losing their forms at the base. In a side light, the objects are coloured where the light shines upon them, while the shadows are all of one tint: even red is grey in the shadow; but when the light is behind you, every object is made out with its proper colour." The same clear, simple mode of instruction distinguishes all he says regarding the treatment of that unstable element, water. "To paint water well, it ought, if possible, to be painted at once with a full pencil and a quantity of vehicle: the colours reflected in water appear more pleasing from their possessing a rich pulpy substance, and also from their sweetly melting into each other. In painting water, particular attention should be paid to the place and distance, as it alters much according to the situation. Objects near the foreground raise their reflections strong when they touch aught, but are often lost when they come to the bottom of the picture; while, on the contrary, objects in the distance show their reflections stronger as they approach towards you. This arises from the waves conveying the reflection being larger and less under the influence of perspective than when they touch the distant object."

Burnet is equally plain and explicit on the subject of "sky:" as his remarks are the offspring of his own observations, I shall give the student

all the advantage which can be derived from them. "The sky being of a receding character, all those points which contribute to give it such character should be the study of the painter. Mere white, for example, will seldom keep its place in a sky, but ought to be used in foreground objects for the purpose of giving a retiring quality to the whites in the sky and distance. Softness of form also aids in giving the sky a retiring character, although it is necessary to give a little sharpness to prevent the sky appearing what is termed woolly; yet very little is sufficient to give firmness to the whole. Clouds are much more opaque in the north than in the south, as the light shines upon them in the one situation and through them in the other. Their form alters much, too, according to the time of day: at noon they are round, and more like those of Wouvermans; in the evening they are more like those of Cuyp or Both, especially about an hour before the sun goes down." Besides remarks originating in the contemplation of nature, there are, in his school-books, observations on some of the landscapes of our greatest masters. Under the date of May, 1814, I find the following memoranda concerning the pictures of Richard Wilson in the British Institution:—"I observed some pictures more pleasing than others; those which seemed most so were light pictures with warm foregrounds falling into a cool sky and a distance, the middle ground mostly in shadow of a purple grey, with yellow and green touches through it; a piece of blue drapery in the foreground gives great value. Of all things, Wilson seems care-

nal to keep a proper balance of hot and cold colour, and of light and shade, with very little positive colour, and little of black or white, but always some of each."

But whilst this young painter was noting the excellence of Wilson, or watching the shifting colours of the sky and the changing hues of nature, he was sensible that a disease which flatters while it destroys was gradually gaining upon him as ice upon the stream, and robbing him of his vigour, bodily and mental. He still continued his excursions among the fields: the consumption from which he was a sufferer made him feel the beauty more deeply of solitary places: he was to be found often in secluded nooks; and the beautiful churchyard of Lee, in Kent, near which he, in his latter days, resided, was a place where he frequently wandered. But change of air and scene brought no improvement to his health; his looks began to fade; he could scarcely take his customary walk in the fields, or use his notebook and pencil. He is still remembered about Lewisham and Lee as one who was to be found in lonely walks making sketches. His cheerfulness never forsook him: he loved to talk with his friends concerning art; and at times, when he forgot that his days could be but few, he spoke of landscapes which he had planned and resolved to execute. On finding that death was near, he desired his brother John to bury him in the village church of Lee, which forms the background of several of his studies, and resigned *himself* calmly to his fate. He died on the 27th of July, 1816, aged 28 years. His dying request

could not, it seems, be complied with: church etiquette forbade the burial of a stranger, even of genius, in the church of Lee, and he was interred in the churchyard of Lewisham.

James Burnet had a fine eye, and an equally fine feeling, for the beauties of landscape: his knowledge of nature was extensive and minute; he had watched the outgoings and incomings of shepherds and husbandmen, had studied flocks and herds, and, as the memoranda which we have quoted show, had made himself intimate with much that lends lustre to landscape. It was his custom, in country places, to watch the cows going to pasture or returning home; to look to the manners and practices of the cowherds; nor did he sometimes hesitate to loiter amongst the cottages, and observe through the lighted up windows the employments or amusements of the peasantry. To such feeling for the rural and picturesque, he added an excellent eye for colour; he could employ at will, either the bold deep tones of Rembrandt, or the silvery and luminous tones of Cuyp. To those who know the difficulty of guiding the eye from one extreme to another, this will be deemed great praise. He had considerable poetic feeling: there is nothing coarse or common in his scenes: his trees are finely grouped; his cows are all beautiful; they have the sense to know where the sweetest grass grows; his milkmaids have an air of natural elegance about them, and his cowboys are not without grace.

Of his defects the critics of his day spoke; they called his cows lean, his shadows too dark,

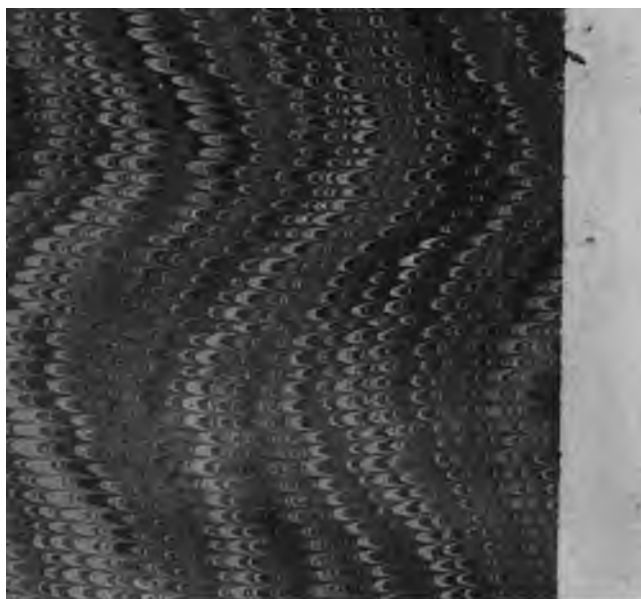
THE BRITISH PAINTERS.

and saw his sheep with their torn fleeces seemed creatures dying of the rot. Those who are acquainted with country scenes, and with flocks and herds, may smile at some of these remarks. Under a fat cow a milkmaid will think it nearly labour lost to place her pail; and sheep which graze among briars and thorns cannot fail to show dishevelled fleeces. No doubt he had defects; but what were they compared to the great natural truth and beauty of his delineations?

THE END.

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